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BOB DE MOOR

PROFESSOR SATŌ'S THREE FORMULAE

PART 2



SCRIPT AND PANEL LAYOUT **EDGAR P. JACOBS**

ARTWORK **BOB DE MOOR**

PROFESSOR SATŌ'S THREE FORMULAE

MORTIMER VERSUS MORTIMER



Colours: Paul-Serge Marssignac

PROFESSOR SATŌ'S THREE FORMULAE

What happened in Part 1: *Mortimer in Tokyo*

As part of research on space travel, Professor **Akira Satō**, a famous Japanese cyberneticist, has invented a machine intended to take man's place in the most hazardous phases of cosmic exploration: a **flying android** that can be replicated at will using electronic parthenogenesis.

He doesn't know, though, that a powerful international organisation, bent on stealing his invention, has bribed his Korean assistant **Kim** – an operation overseen by **Olrik**, eternal nemesis of Professor **Philip Mortimer** and Captain **Francis Blake** of MI5.

One evening **Kim**, while studying an experimental model built by **Satō** in the shape of a *ryu*, a dragon from his country's legends, accidentally triggers the launch sequence. The robot flies to Tokyo and causes an aerial disaster.

Believing himself responsible for the accident, a distraught **Satō** calls upon his friend **Mortimer**, currently in Kyoto for a series of conferences.

Immediately informed by **Kim**, **Olrik**, operating from a submarine off Sagami Bay, orders that **Mortimer** be neutralised.

Despite two attempts on his life, however, the British scientist manages to reach Tokyo, where **Satō** has booked a suite for him at the New Otani hotel.

Kim takes the professor to **Satō**'s house in Sagami Bay. After showing **Mortimer** his laboratory and describing his discovery, the cyberneticist recounts the incident with the *ryu*. **Mortimer** is quick to realise that his friend is the target of a nefarious plot and demonstrates **Kim**'s betrayal.

Satō then reveals that the essential part of his research is contained within **three formulae**, useless when considered separately, and which he's taken the precaution of placing in three different banks in Tokyo. Feeling threatened, he gives **Mortimer** proxies that will allow him, should the need arise, to recover the precious documents.

But **Kim**, having overheard that vital exchange between the two men, immediately informs **Olrik**, who decides to hurry his plans.

The colonel captures Professor **Satō**, then **Mortimer**, whom he's lured into a clever trap. Then, armed with all three proxies, he has **Kim** build an android – a perfect image of **Mortimer**, which is to go and recover the three formulae.

His plan works flawlessly in the first two banks. But as he's about to enter the third, the android breaks down. Forced to delay the final phase, **Olrik**, who learns of the impending arrival of Captain **Francis Blake**, has no choice but to take new measures...

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THAT SUNDAY AT 12.05 P.M. PRECISELY, THE JAL DC-8 FROM HONG KONG LANDS ON RUNWAY B AT HANEDA, TOKYO'S AIRPORT...



FROM ONE OF THE TERRACES, TWO MEN – ONE OF THEM NOBUO* – ARE WATCHING THE BOARDING RAMP WHERE THE FIRST PASSENGERS HAVE JUST APPEARED...



HE'S REFERRING TO CAPTAIN BLAKE WHO, JUST AS HE'D PROMISED, IS COMING TO LEND HIS FRIEND PHILIP MORTIMER A HAND...



* SEE PROFESSOR SATO'S THREE FORMULAE – PART 1

HAVING QUICKLY CLEARED CUSTOMS...



...THE OFFICER ENTERS THE HALL, BUT...



Oh?... Philip isn't here?... Bah! He probably got held up at the last minute...

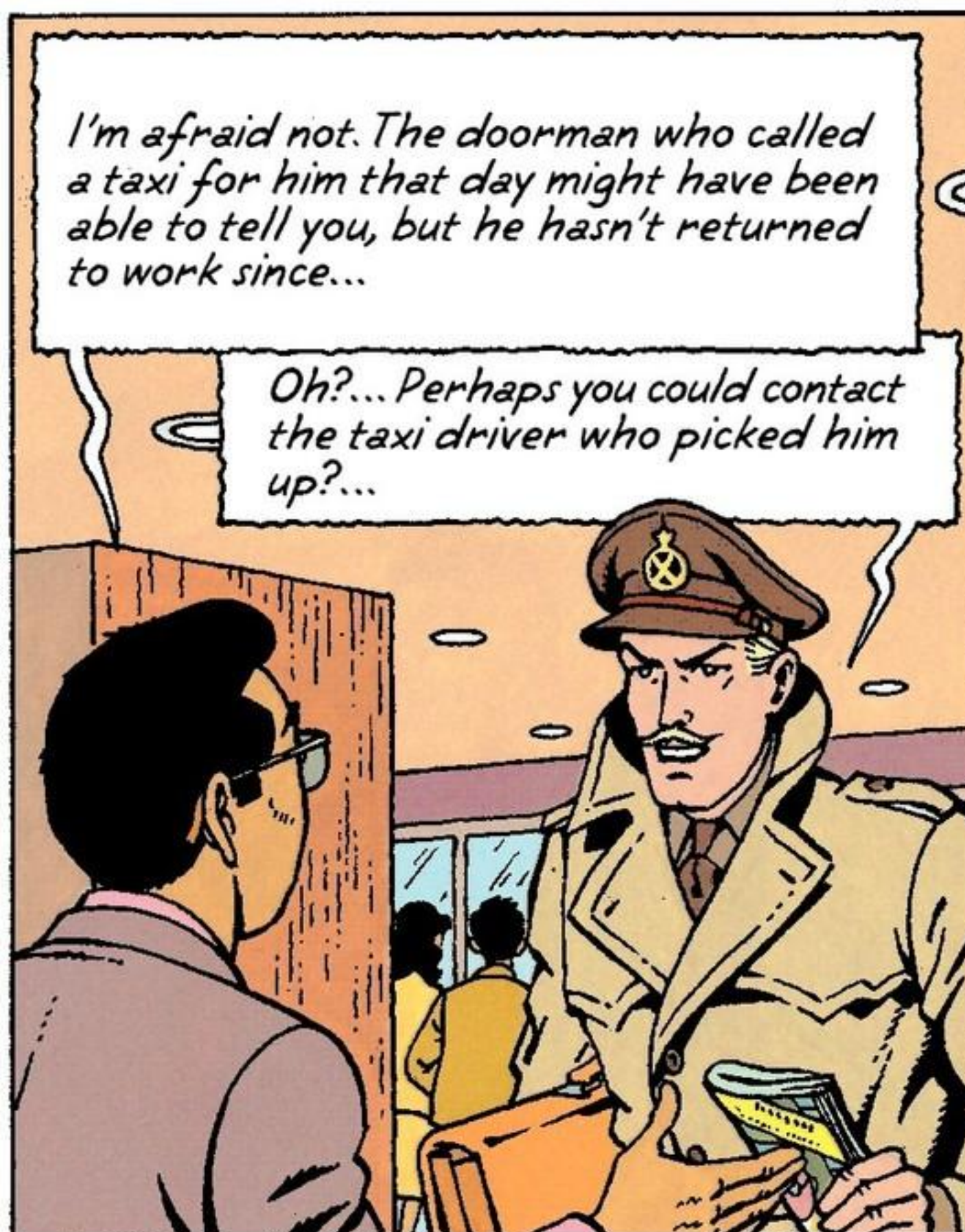
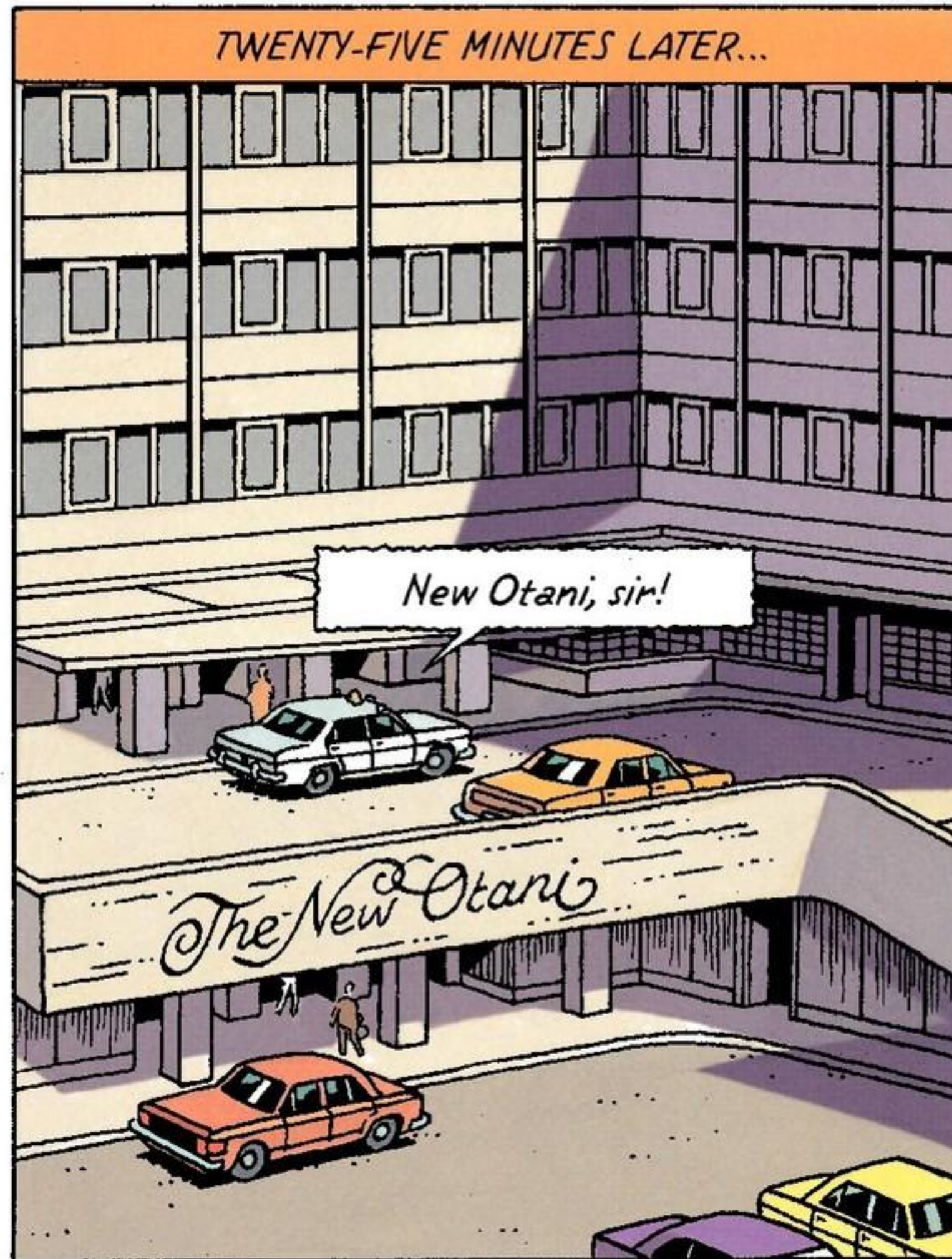
SO, WITHOUT WAITING, HE LEAVES THE TERMINAL...



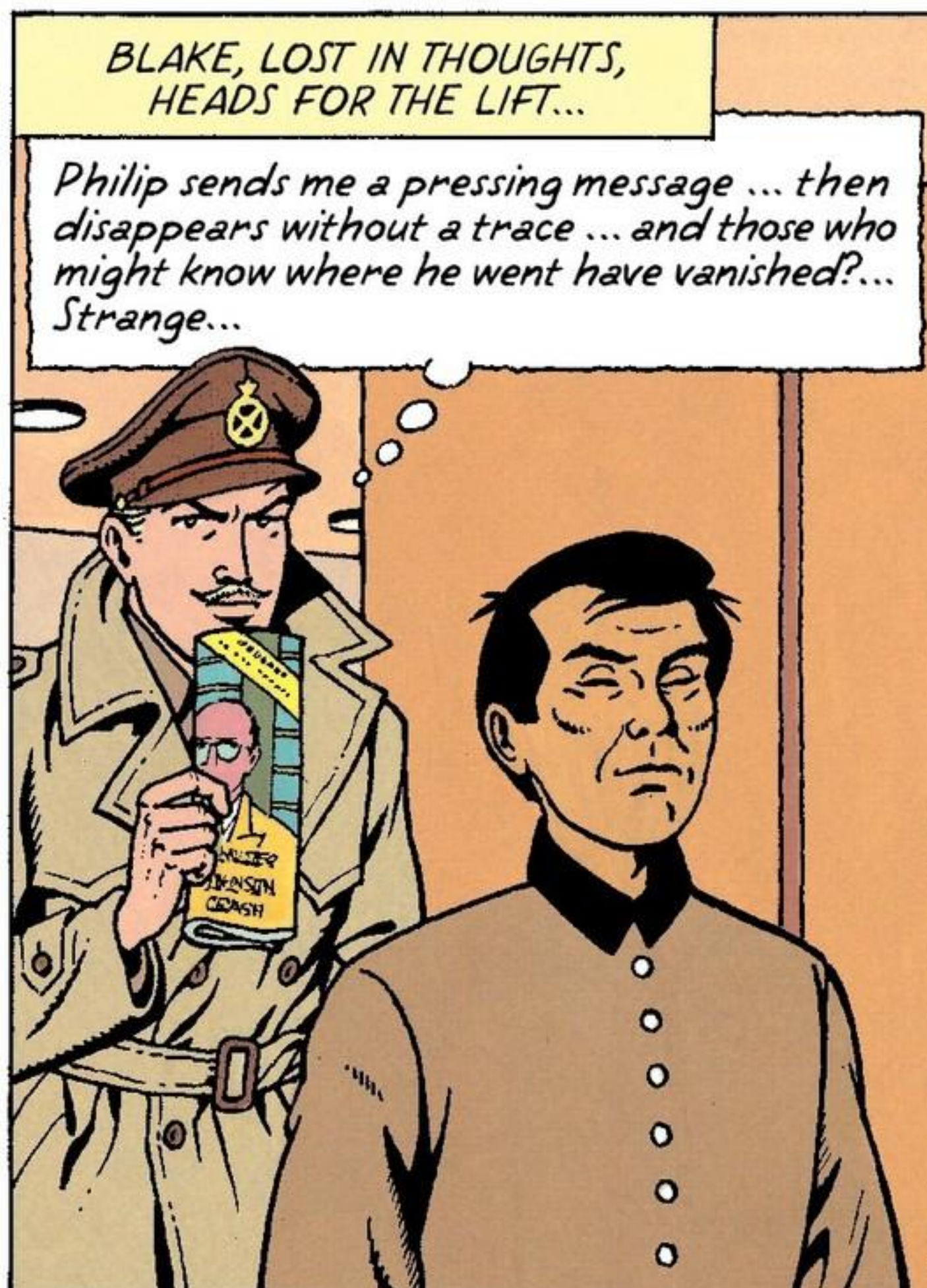
NEXT MINUTE THE TAXI IS BARRELLING DOWN THE MOTORWAY THAT CONNECTS HANEDA TO THE CAPITAL. BUT 60 FEET BEHIND, A GREEN DATSUN IS TRAILING HIM...

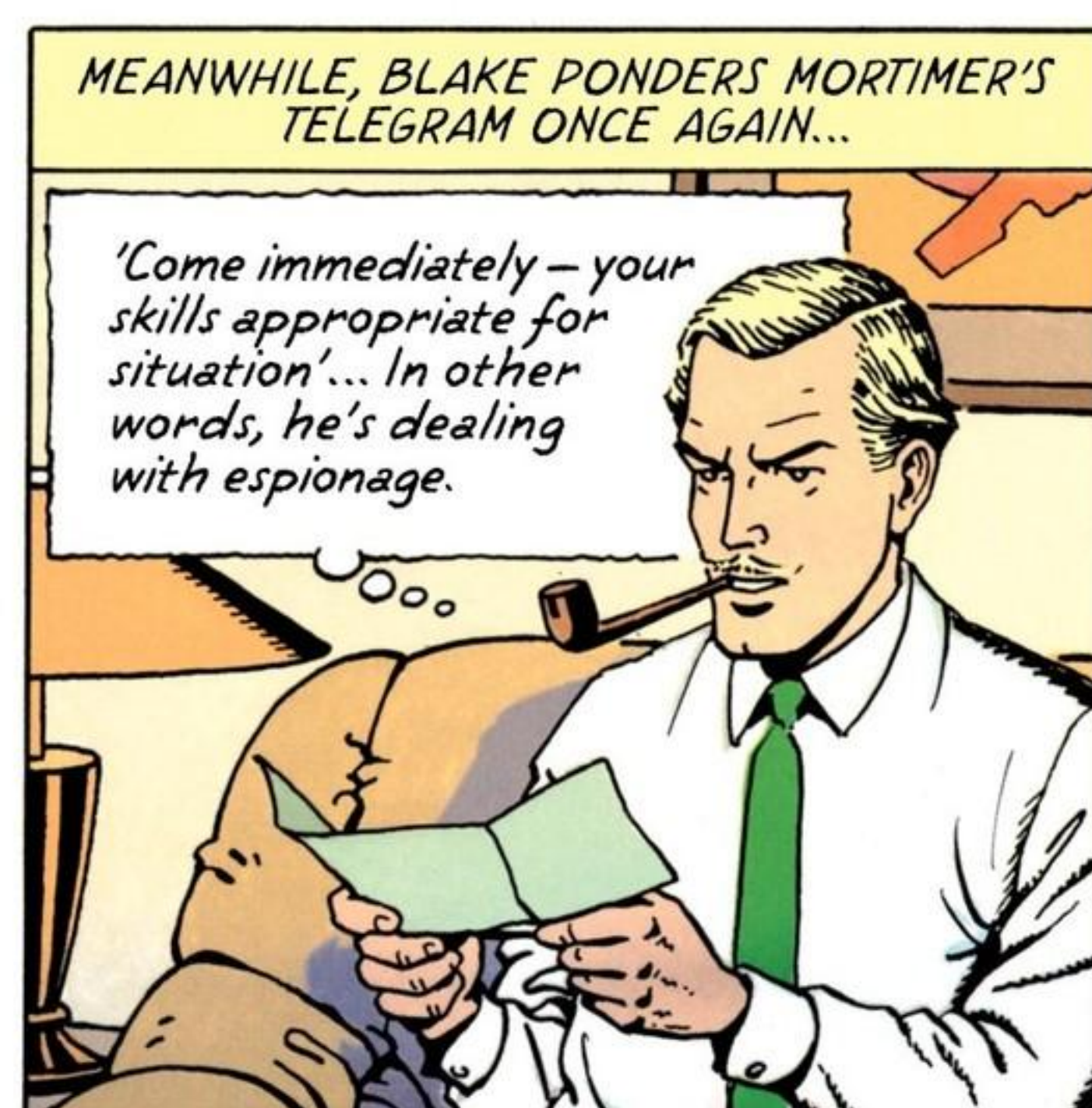
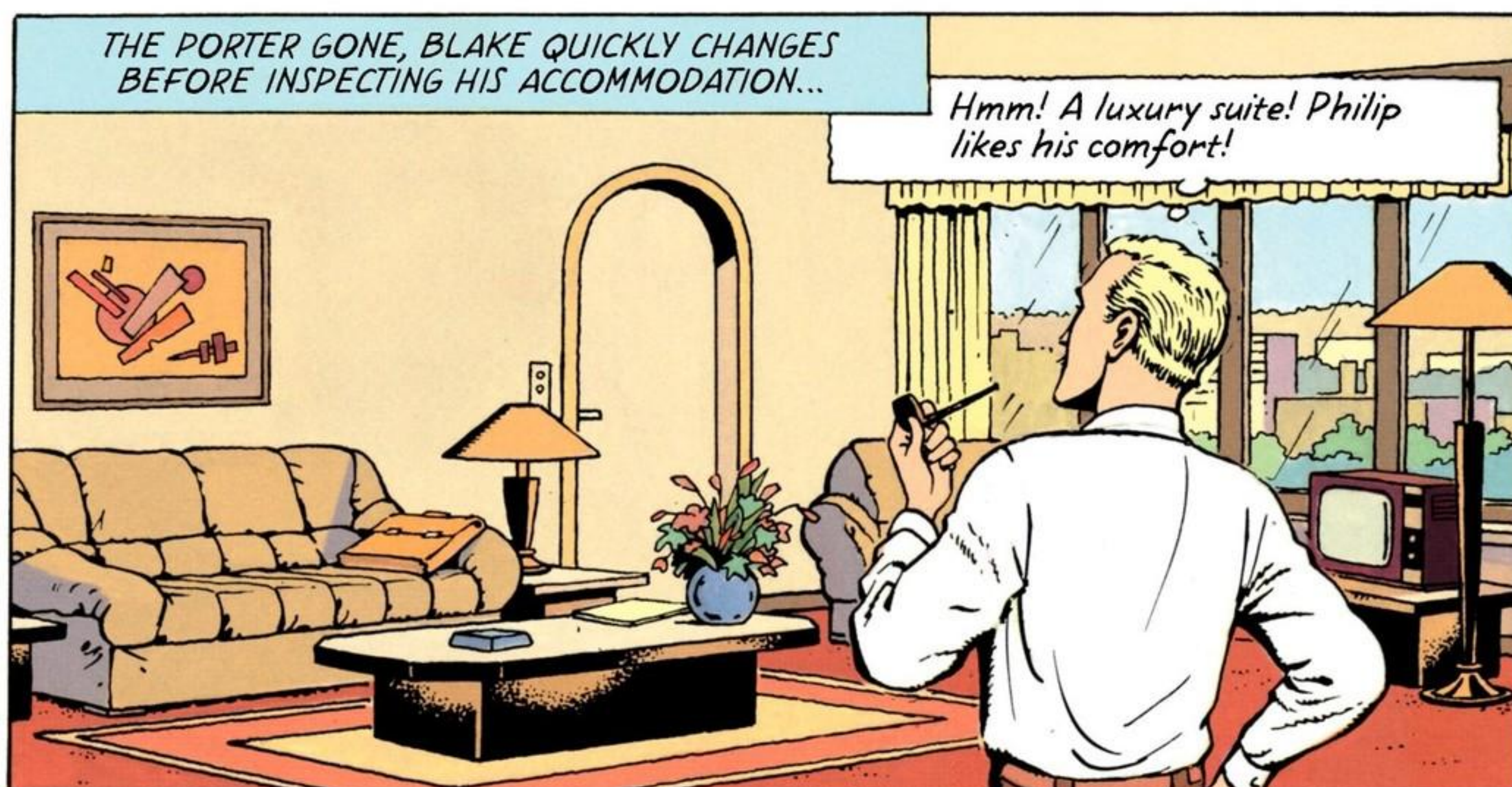


*YES!

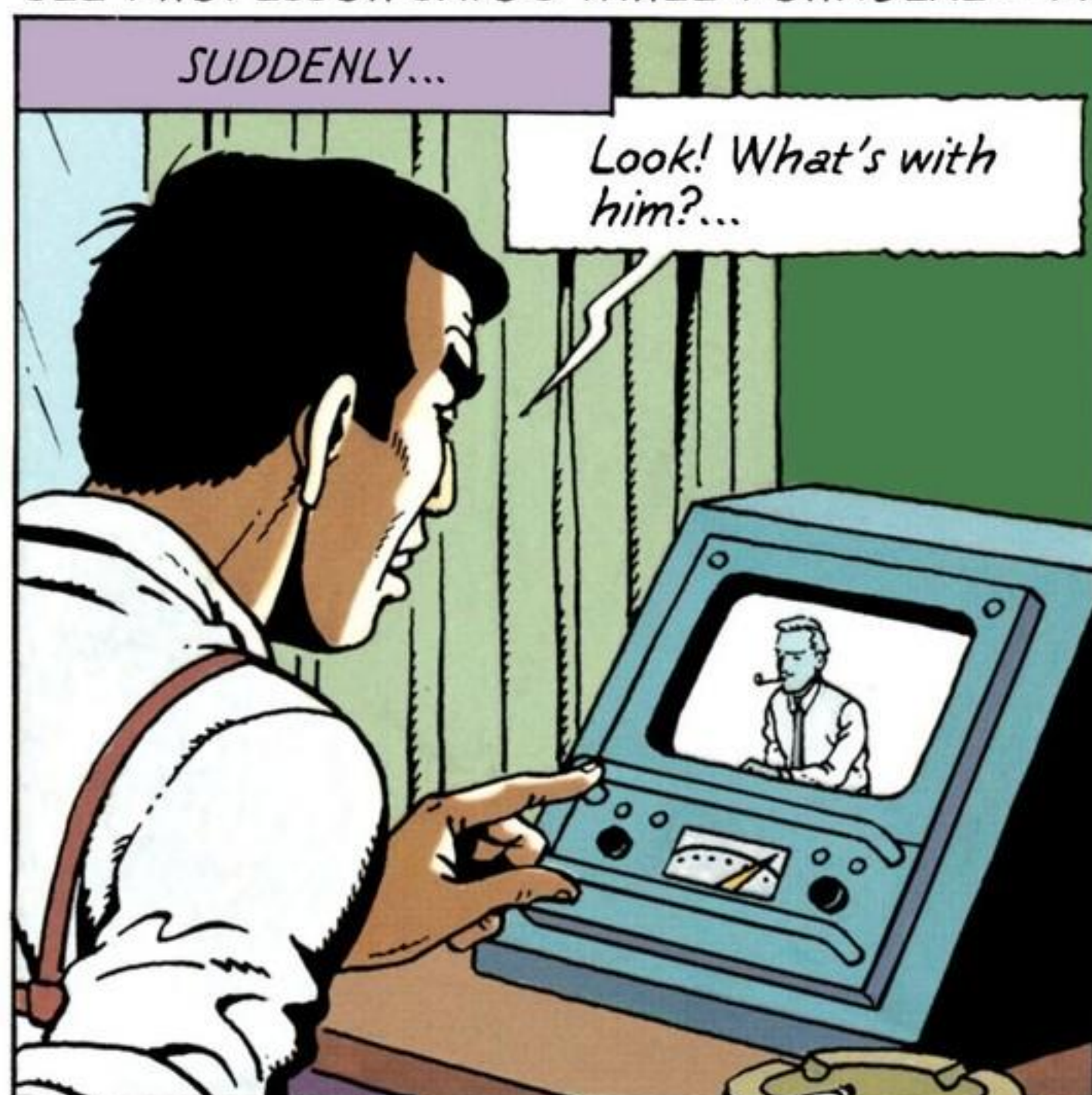


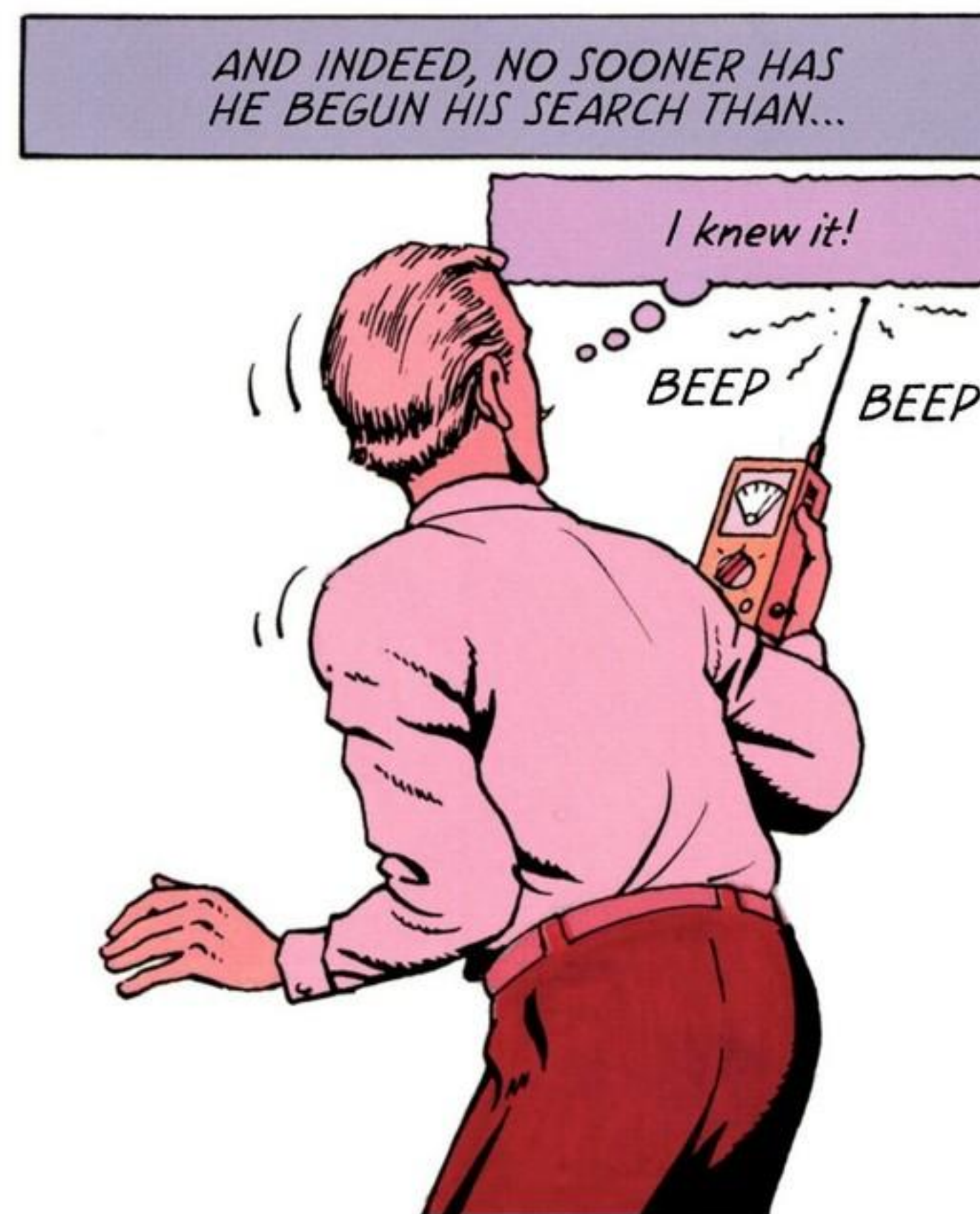
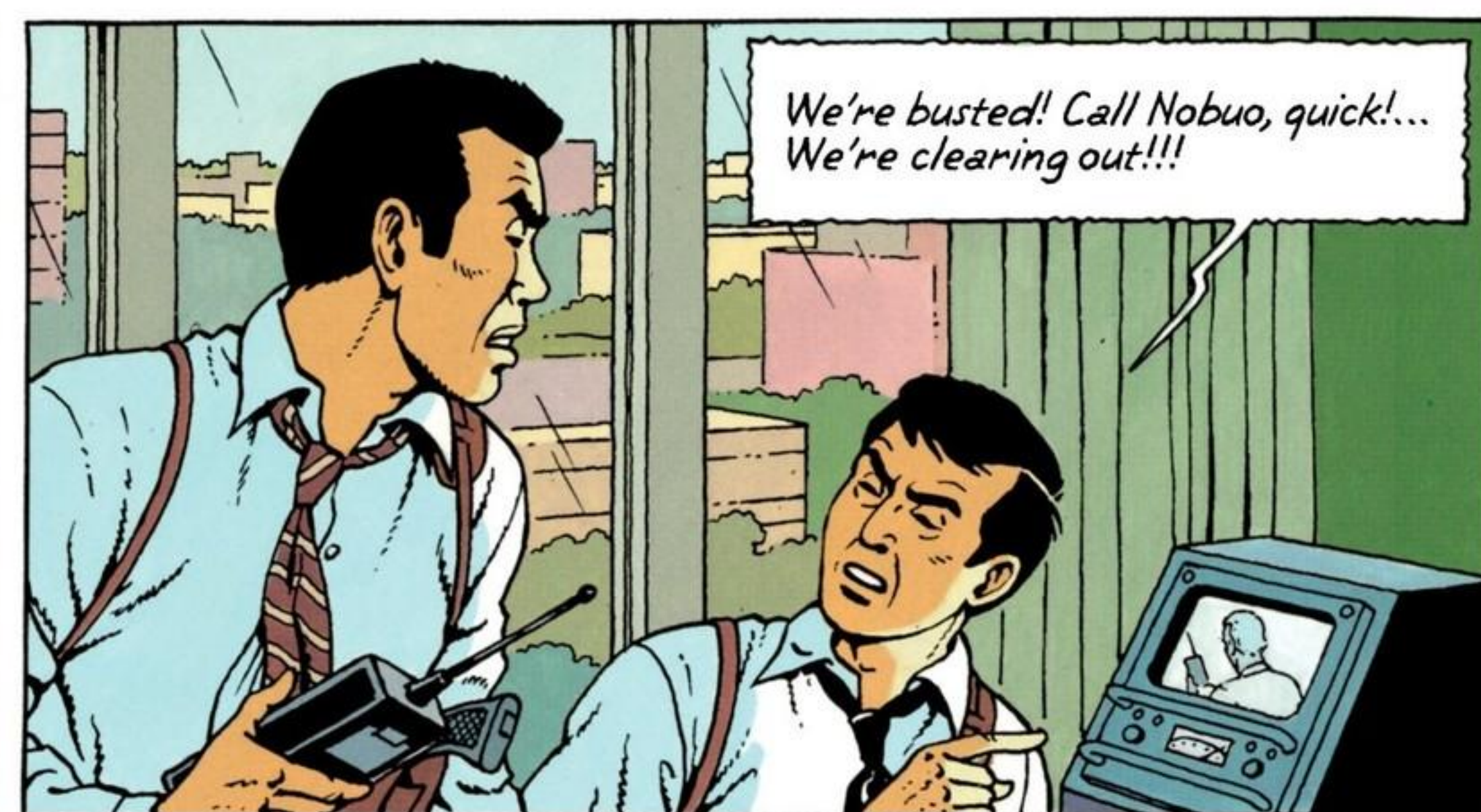
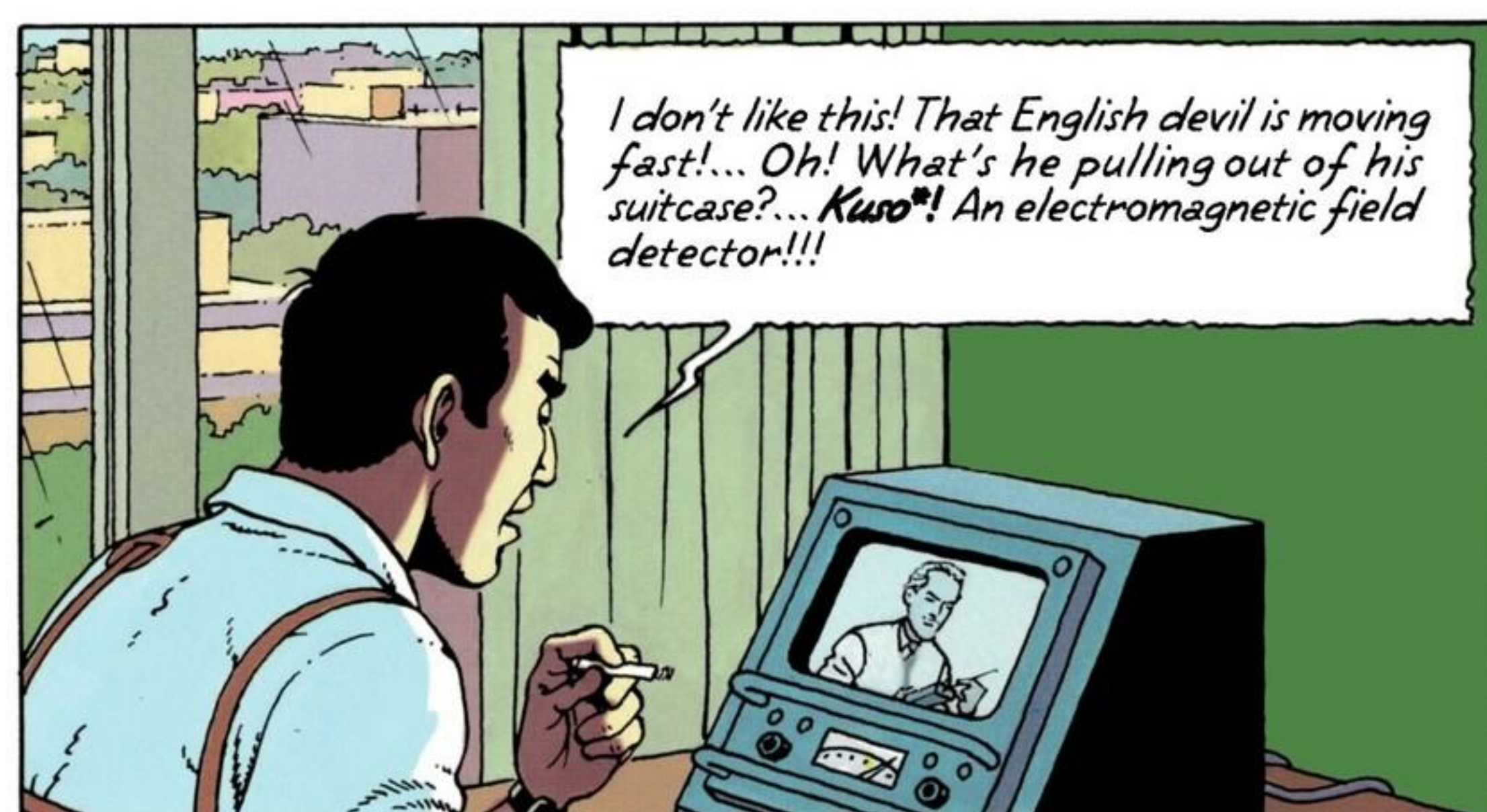
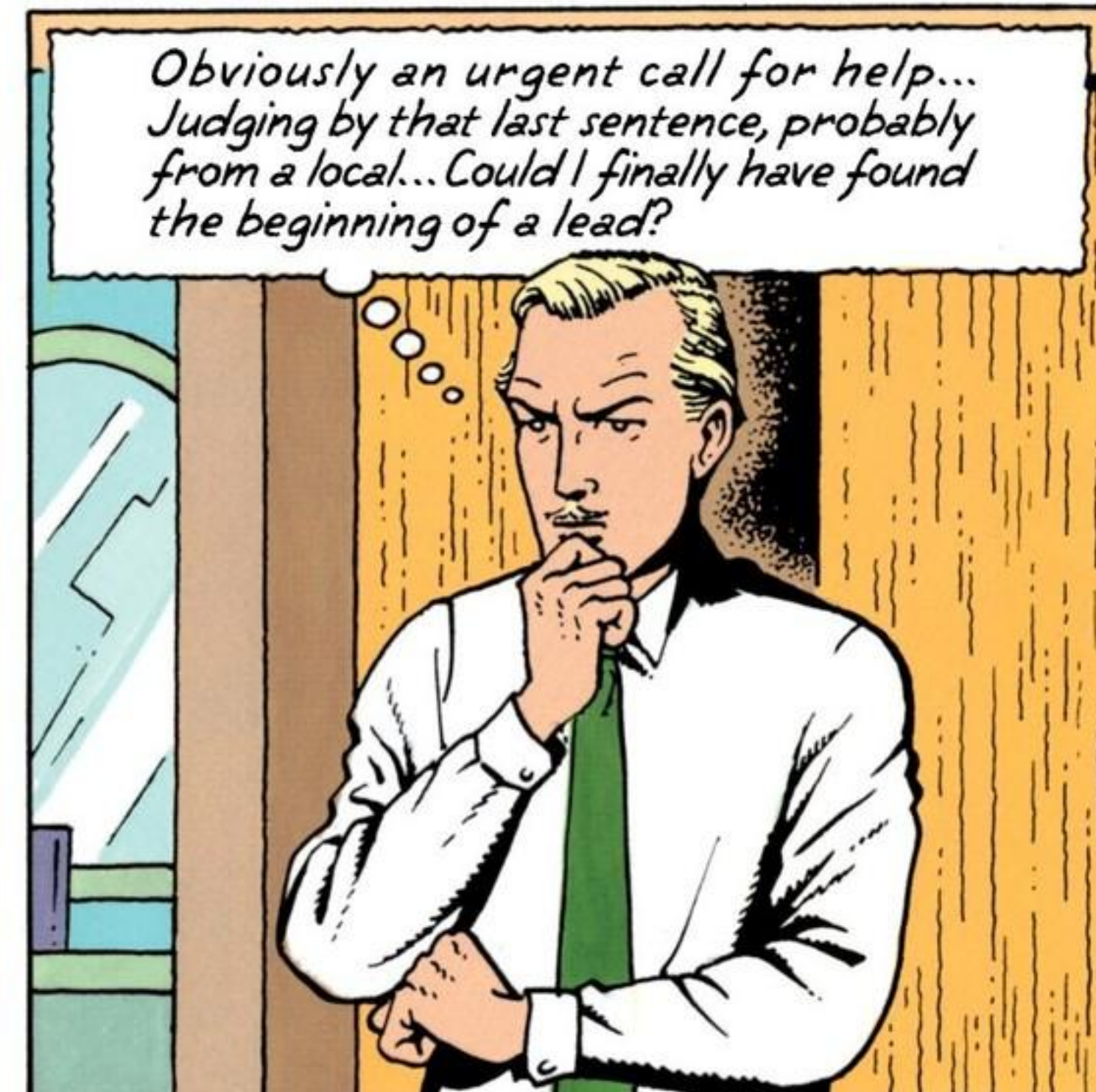
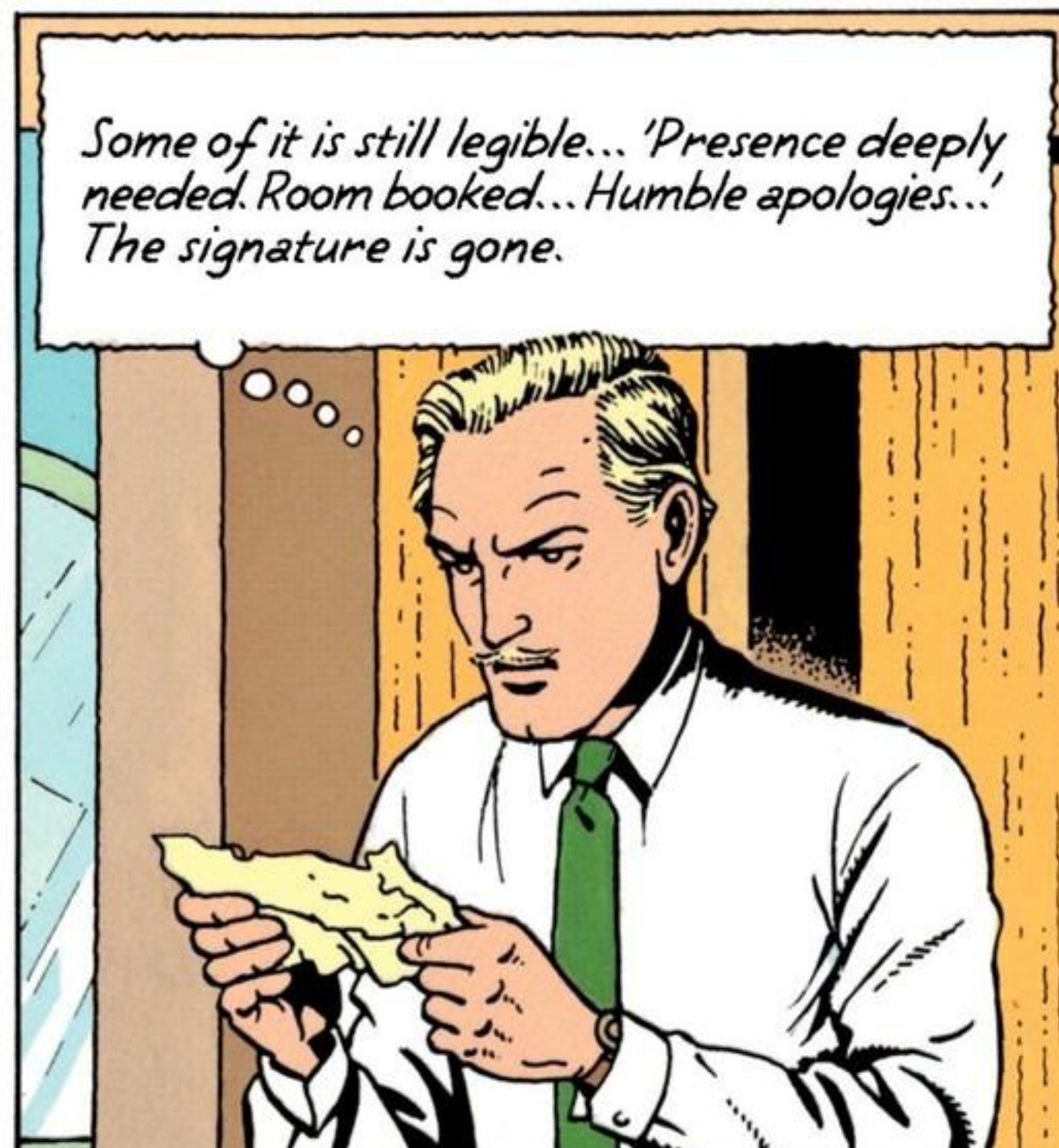
*TELEPHONE GREETING - HELLO

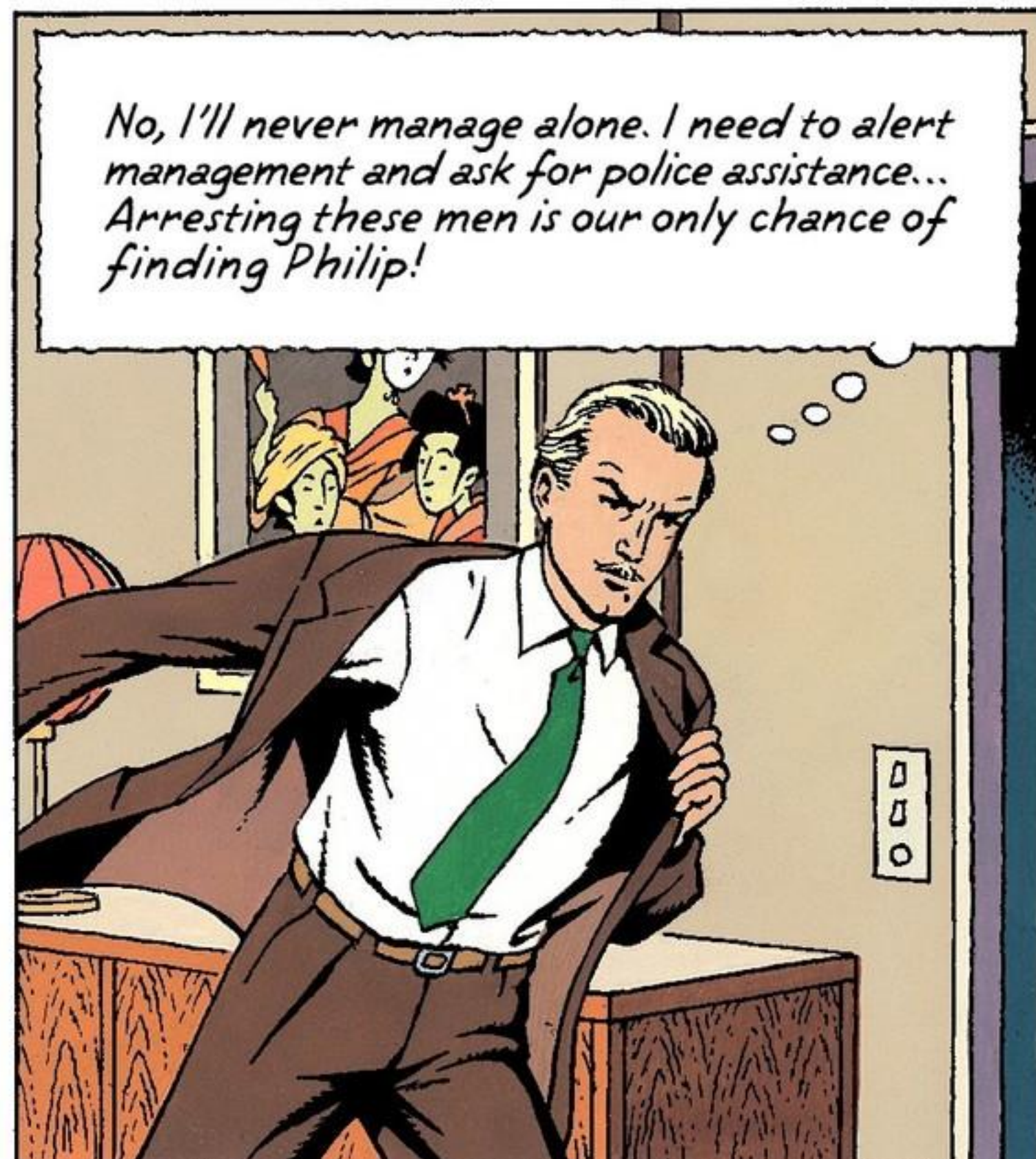
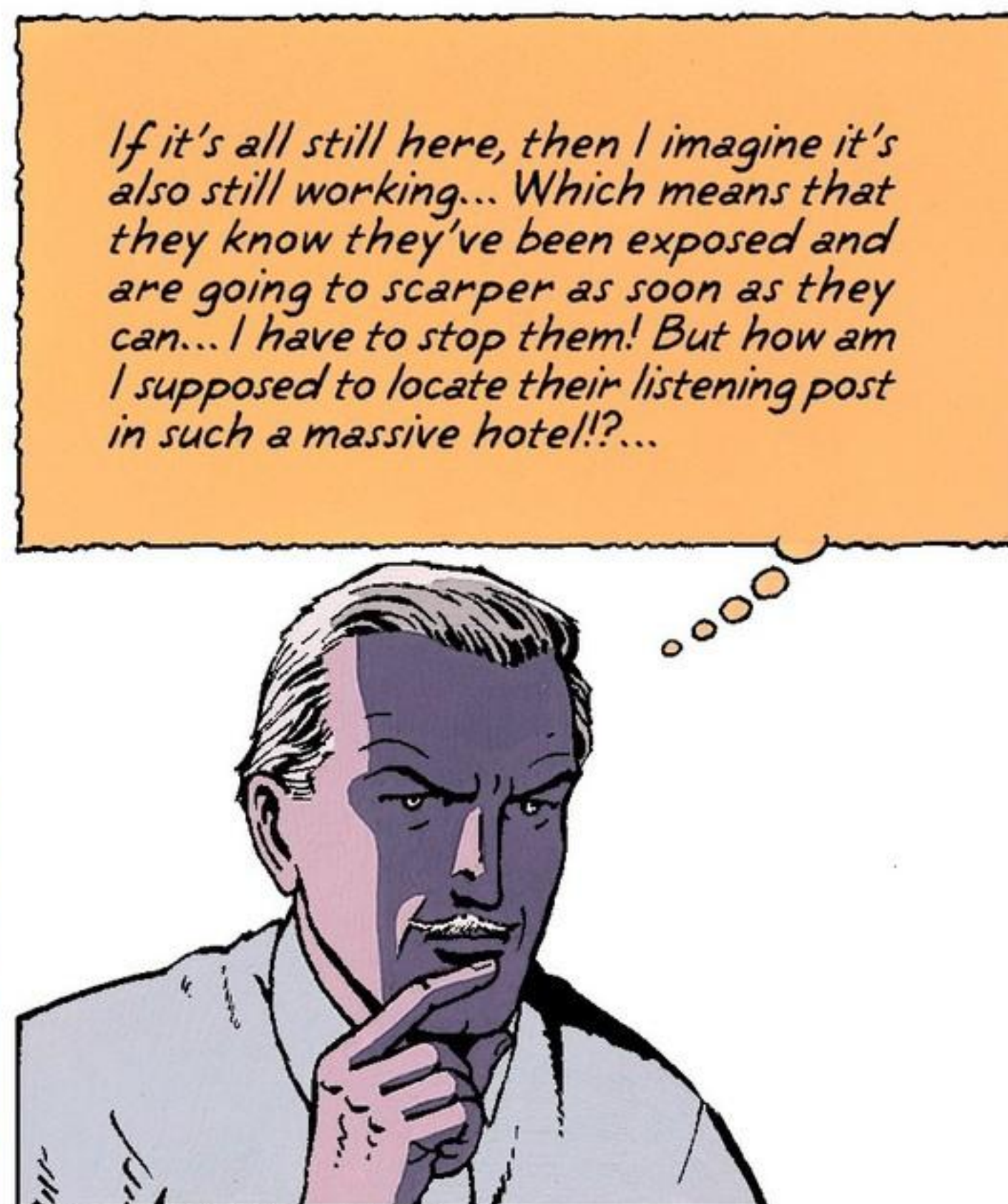
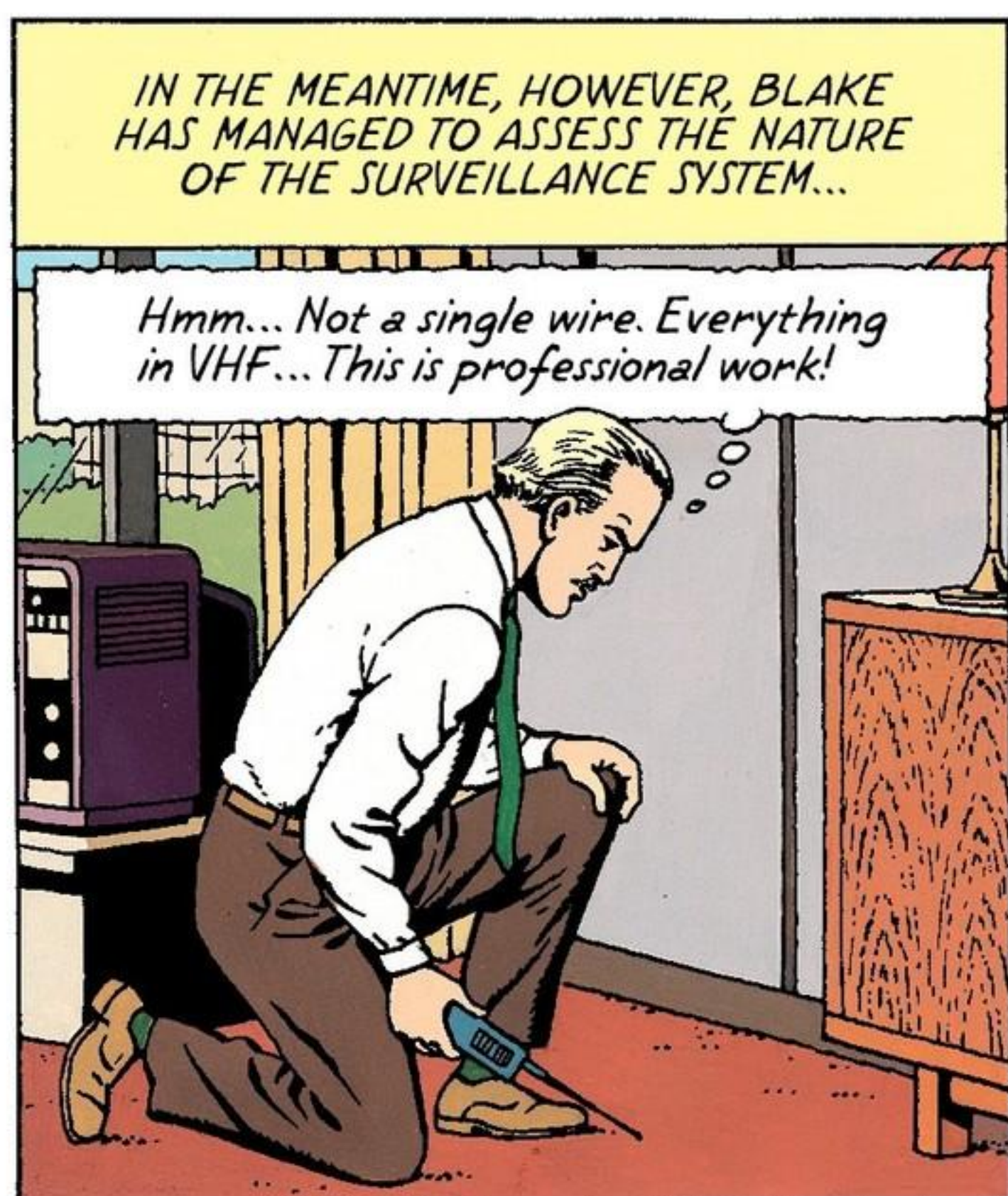
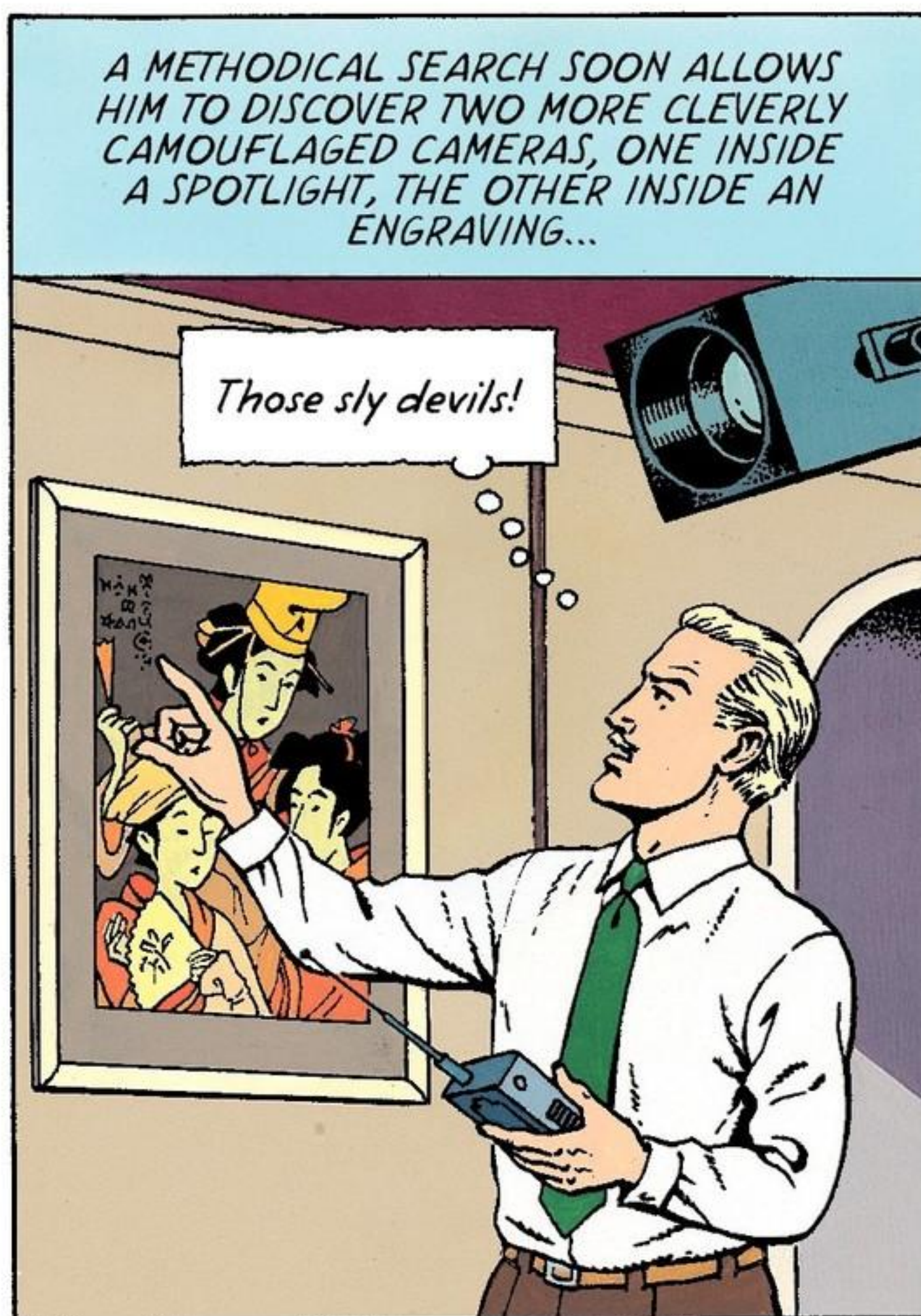
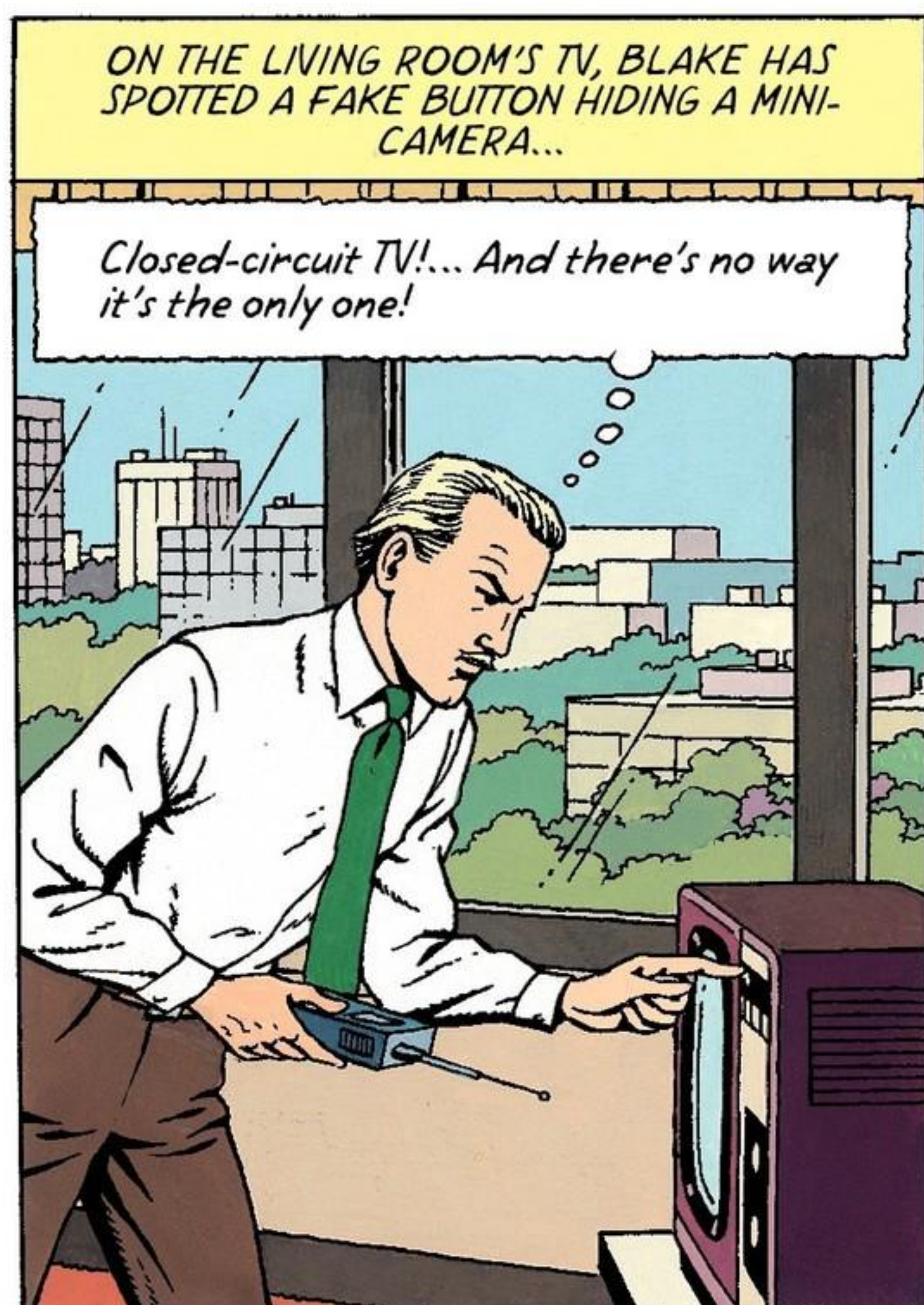


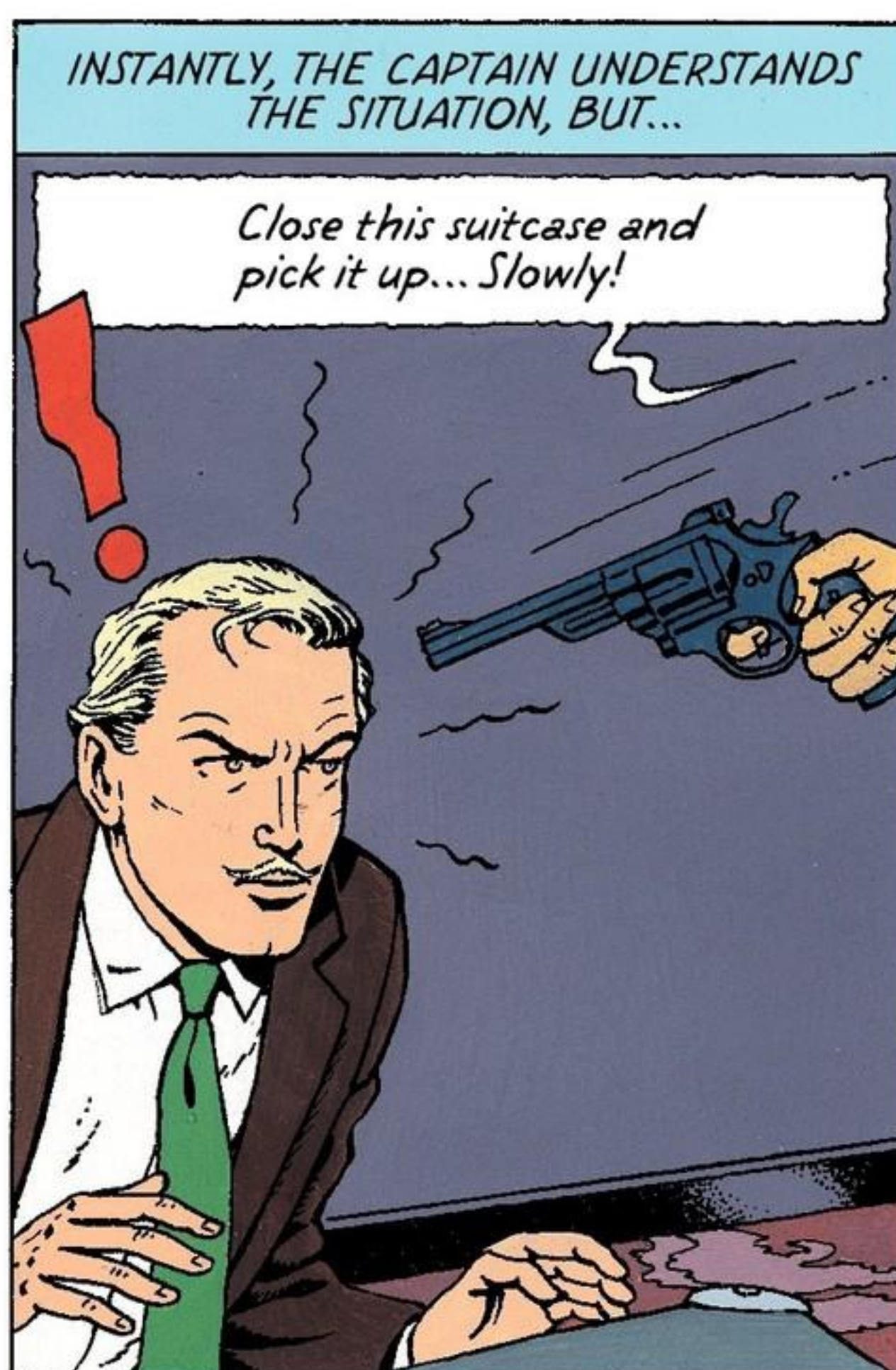


*SEE PROFESSOR SATO'S THREE FORMULAE - PART 1









*FOREIGNER

BLAKE IS PUSHED TOWARDS THE DATSUN, WHOSE ENGINE IS ALREADY IDLING...



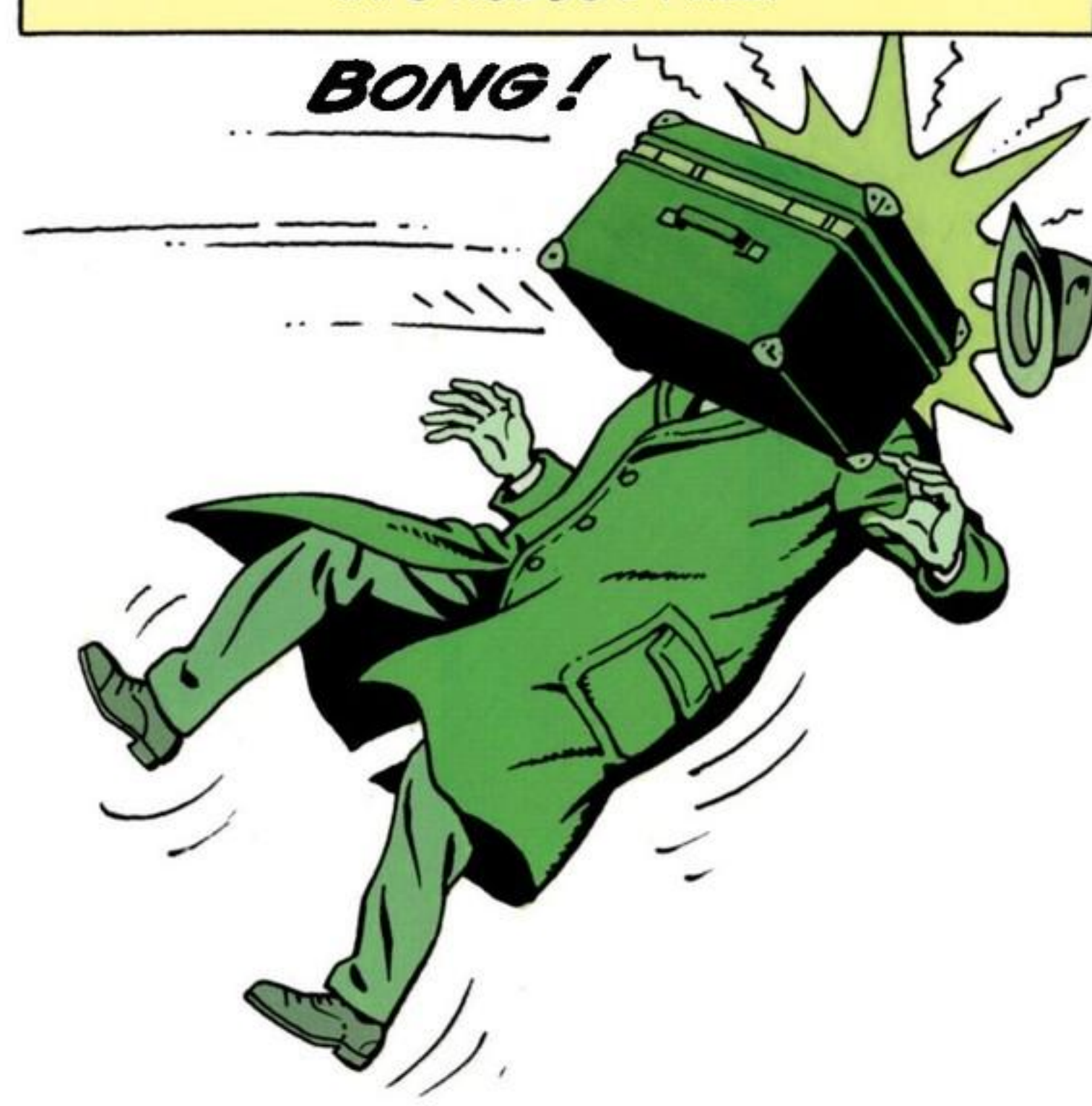
LEANING FORWARD TO OPEN THE DOOR, HE CATCHES A GLIMPSE OF KURO'S REFLECTION IN THE WINDOW, READY TO KNOCK HIM OUT WITH THE BUTT OF HIS REVOLVER...



BUT AT THAT MOMENT, TURNING ON HIS HEELS, BLAKE SWINGS THE TV CASE FIRST INTO TOSHI, THEN KURO...



...BEFORE LAUNCHING IT TO SLAM INTO NOBUO'S FACE!



THEN, IN THE SAME MOVEMENT, HE DIVES TO GRAB THE PISTOL ON THE GROUND, BUT...



FURIOUS TO HAVE MISSED HIS TARGET, THE MAN IMMEDIATELY BACKS UP IN ORDER TO TRY AGAIN...



...THE MAN WHO'S STAYED AT THE WHEEL DRIVES STRAIGHT FOR OUR FRIEND, WHO BARELY HAS TIME TO JUMP BACK!



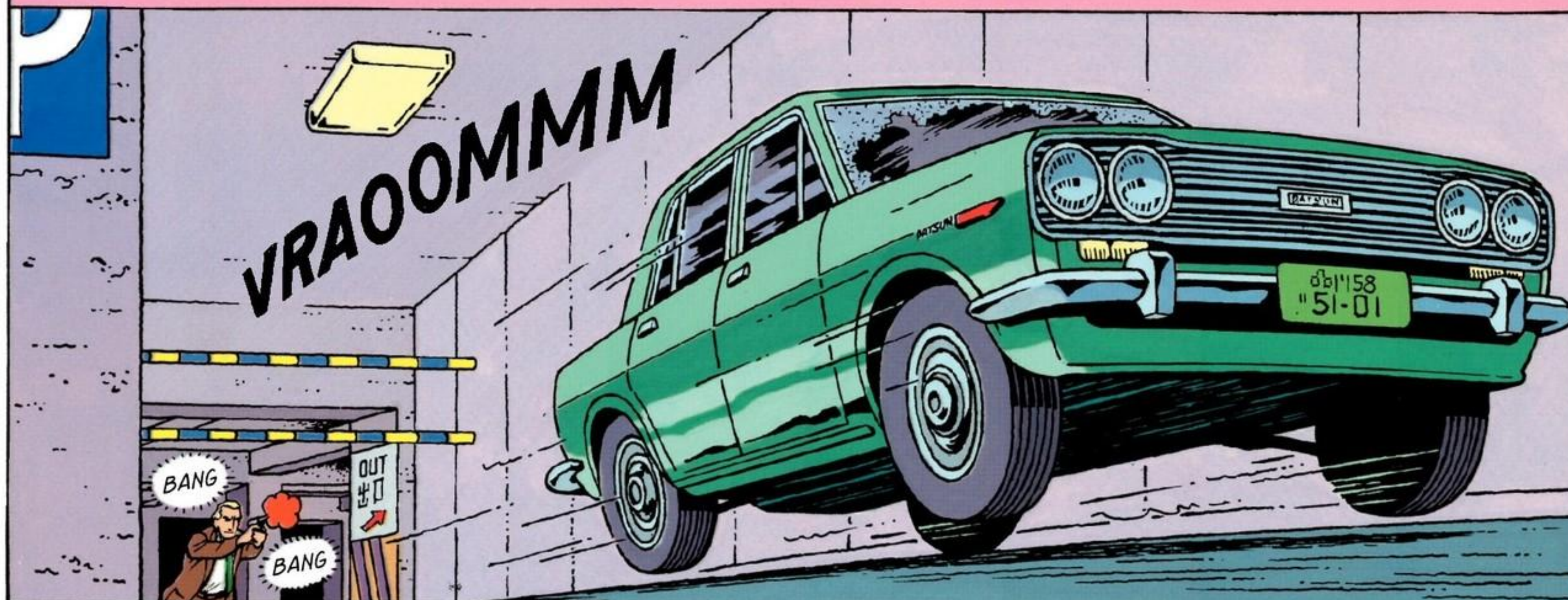
BUT AS THE CAR SPEEDS TOWARDS BLAKE ONCE MORE, THE CAPTAIN FIRES AT THE WINDSCREEN, SHATTERING IT AND FORCING THE DRIVER TO COME TO A SCREECHING HALT!!!



SEEING HOW THE SITUATION IS EVOLVING, NOBUO DECIDES THAT RETREAT IS IN ORDER...



AT THIS ORDER, HIS MEN PRECIPITOUSLY PILE INTO THE CAR, AND THE DRIVER FLIES UP THE EXIT RAMP AT TOP SPEED!...

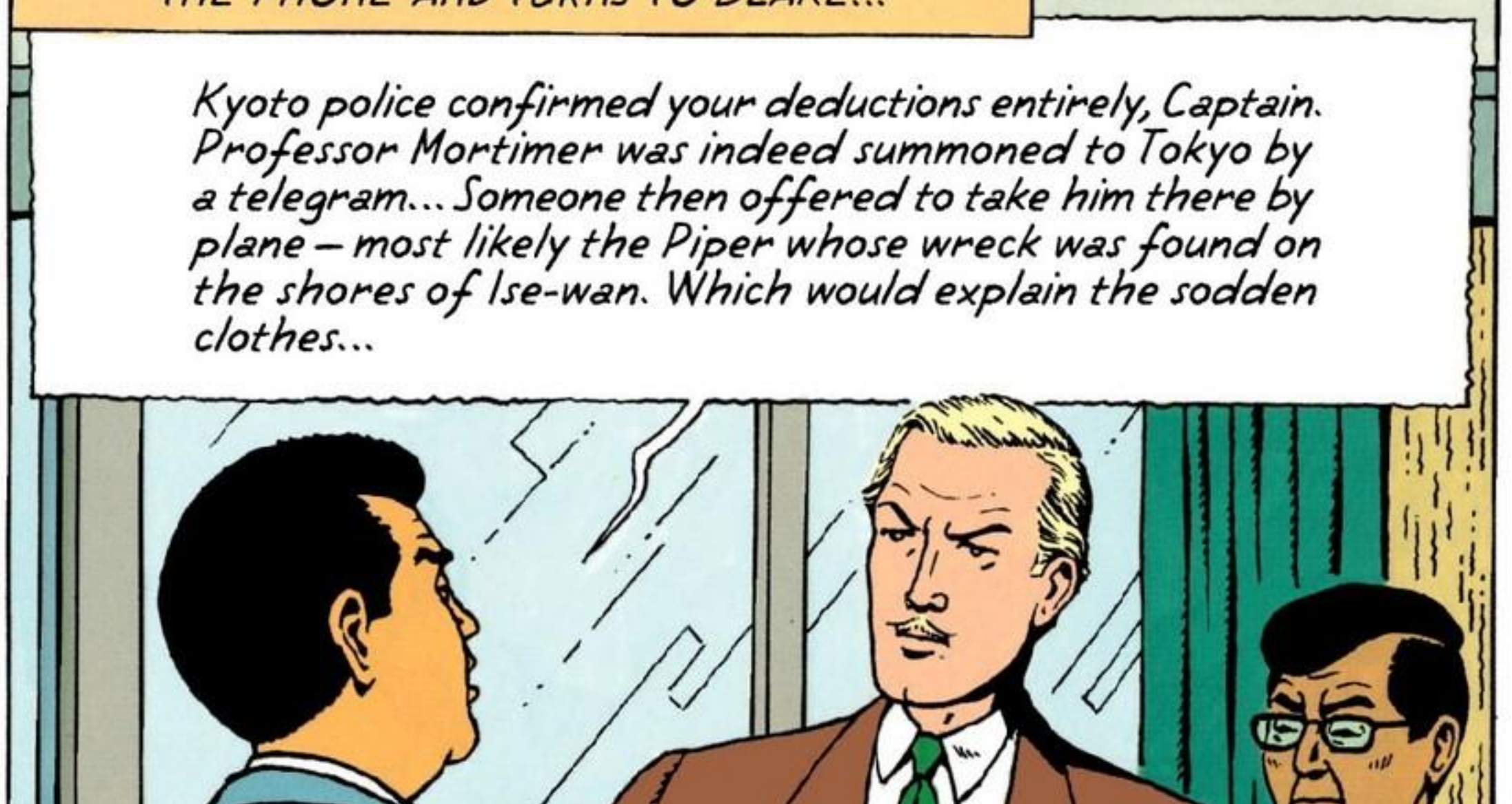


SOME TIME LATER, WHILE THE POLICE CONDUCT THEIR INVESTIGATIONS...



*YES, THAT'S IT... THANK YOU!

SUPERINTENDENT HASUMI HANGS UP THE PHONE AND TURNS TO BLAKE...



...Another fact: a driver with the JNR Bus Company picked up a man that fit the description of your friend near the crash site, and dropped him off at Nagoya Station, where he intended to take the Hikari* to Tokyo.



So to summarise the situation: as he's about to answer a call for help, Mortimer is intercepted by agents from some as yet unknown organisation, escaping from them thanks to a plane crash. After which he successfully makes it to Tokyo and gets in touch with his mysterious contact. But what he then learns is so serious that he decides to call me...



That's the gist of it, Captain. For now, our specialists are examining what's left of the telegram, in the hope of finding out who sent it.

Very well... In the meantime, I'll contact my colleague and friend Colonel Mitsu... Thank you for your collaboration, Superintendent!



*HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SERVICE TRAVELLING BETWEEN TOKYO AND OSAKA

AT THAT MOMENT, AT PROFESSOR SATO'S HOUSE IN SAGAMI BAY...



Wow. Someone's getting it in the neck!

Too right! The Englishman made fools of them!...



INDEED, THE YELLOW TATAMI TEAM IS TREMBLING BEFORE OLRİK'S FURY...

Oh, bravo! Well done! Not only did you compromise all our plans, but now Japanese Intelligence is likely to be on our backs!



...But we couldn't have known that...

That what?! That the man was a professional?!? Get out! Out of my sight! I'll deal with you later...



That blasted Blake is getting decidedly troublesome... Fortunately we'll have our new Mortimer soon!... Sharkey, call all our 'extras' from the New Otani immediately. Have them find a way to get close to the Englishman - discreetly - and pin one of our mini-emitters on him, just in case... I'm going to the lab to check on the Korean's progress.

OK, boss!



MEANWHILE, BLAKE IS TRYING TO CONTACT COLONEL MITSU, HEAD OF THE KC* - IN VAIN...

...What?! Still not there?... Keep trying to reach him. It's extremely important!... No, I'm not leaving the hotel.



AS FOR OLRİK, HE'S JOINED PROFESSOR SATO'S EX-ASSISTANT IN THE UNDERGROUND LABORATORY...

Well? How are we doing, Mr Kim?

I'm in the process of testing a few specimens of our new Mortimer, with the programming you ordered... Although less sophisticated than the previous one, it still poses some problems when it comes to fine-tuning...



*KŌANCHŌSA CHŌ - JAPAN'S PUBLIC SECURITY INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

...Considering that surroundings have an influence on androids, we must be certain that, despite a rushed construction, the copy we choose will not be hindered by perturbations caused by impacts, vibrations, heat, Earth's magnetic field, radio waves, atmospheric phenomena...

Spare me the electronics-for-beginners class, will you, and tell me what this is supposed to be?...

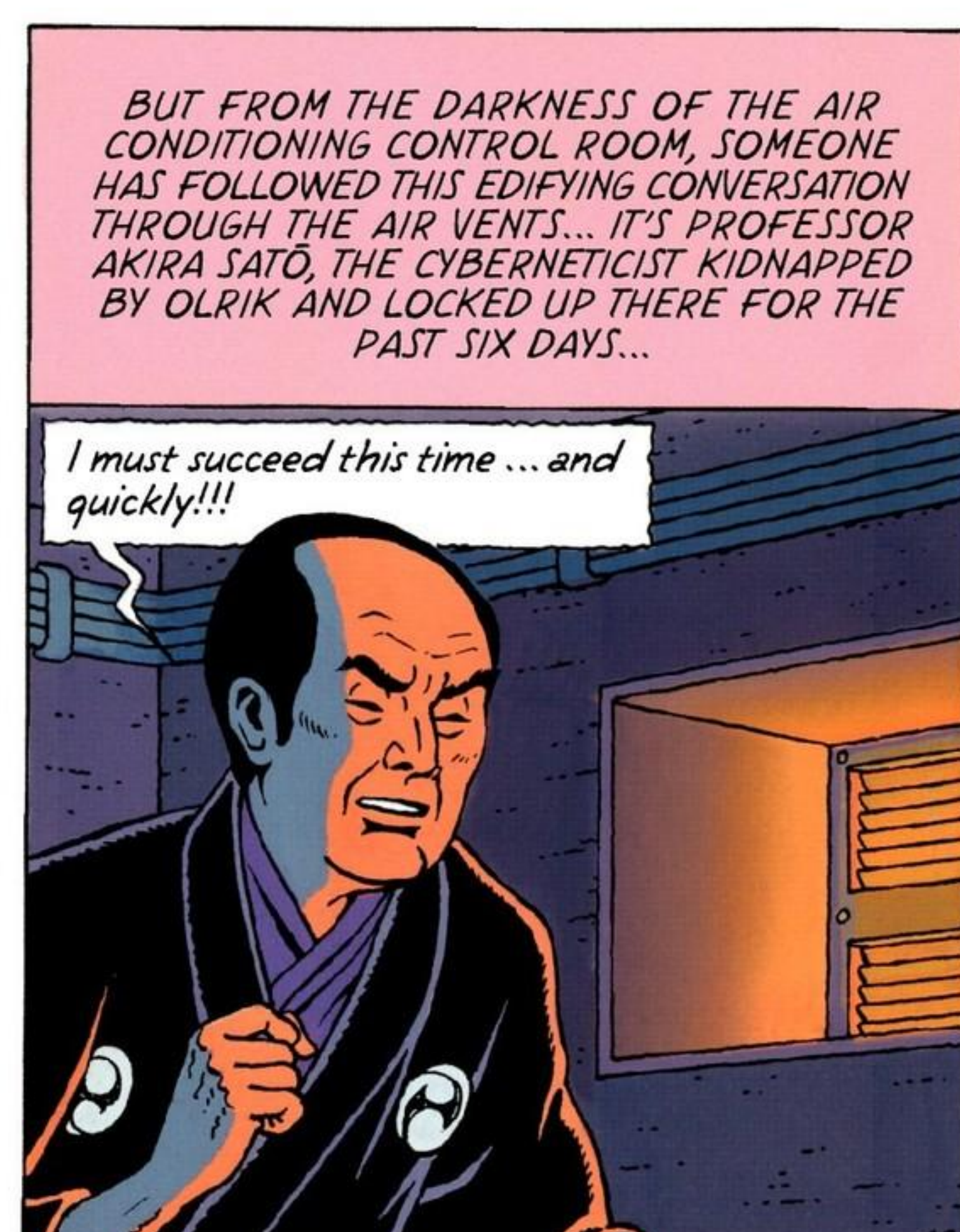
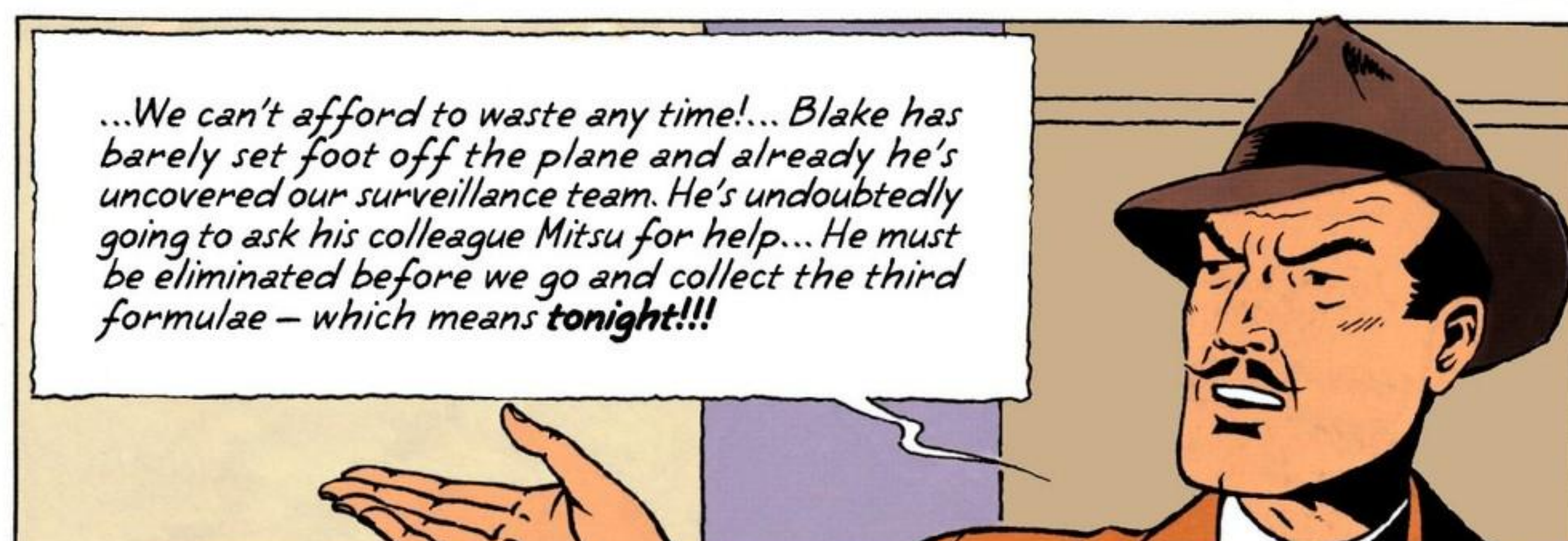
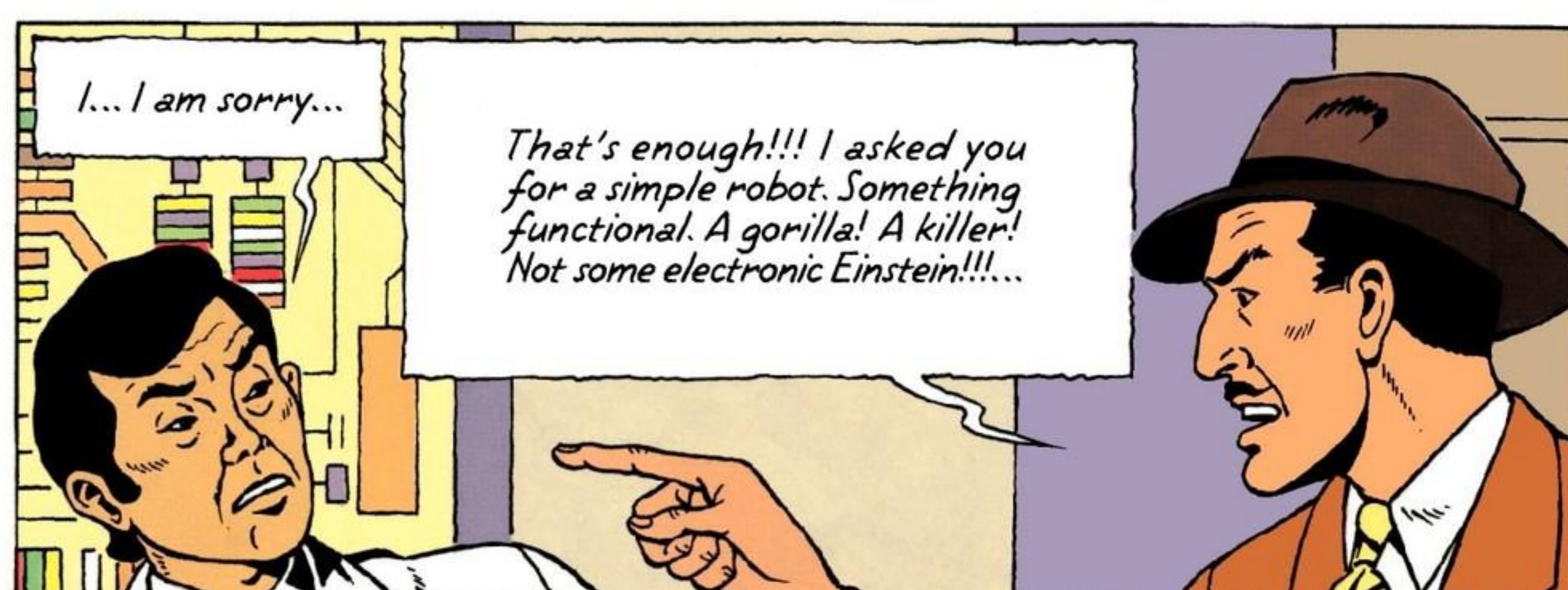


ON THE SCREEN, A ROBO-MORTIMER IS TWITCHING AND CONTORTING IN GROTESQUE FASHION...

It's the vibration-resistance test...

Hmm. This one looks on the weak side...

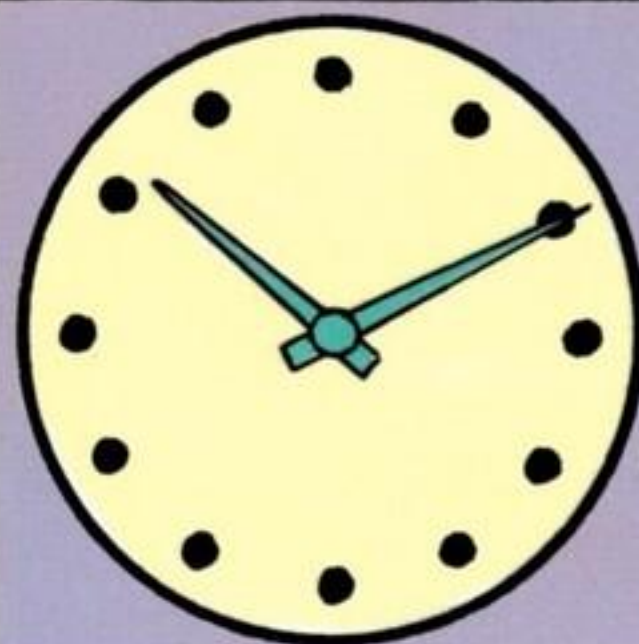




SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HIS CAPTIVITY, UNBEKNOWN TO HIS CAPTORS, SATŌ HAS BEEN PATIENTLY FIDDLING WITH THE AIR CONDITIONING'S CONTROL CONSOLE IN AN ATTEMPT TO ALIGN THE FREQUENCY OF ITS EMISSIONS ONTO THAT OF SAMURAI, MORTIMER'S TERRIBLE GUARDIAN...



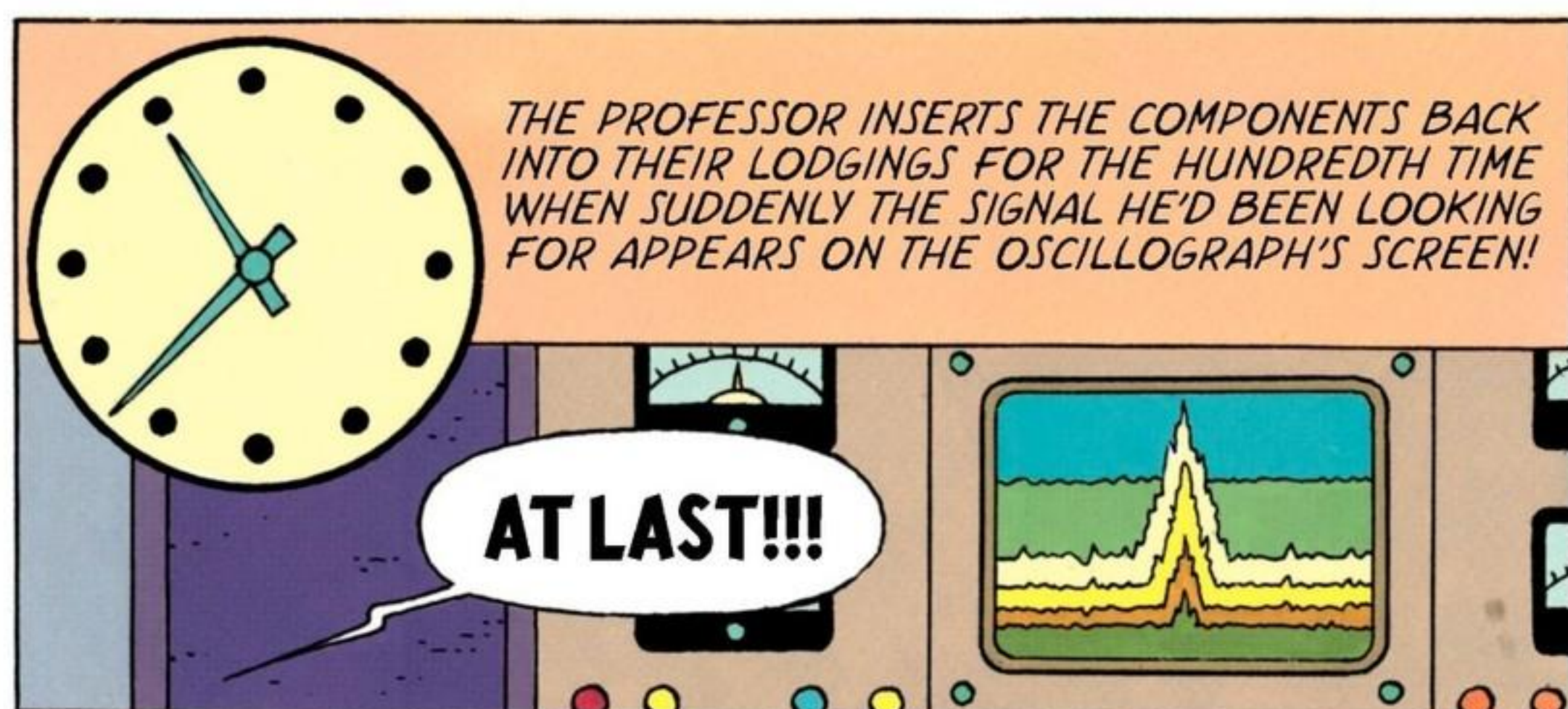
I see only one possible combination left... But it might attract some attention...



...AND THE HOURS GO BY AS EACH MAN IS BENT ON SOLVING HIS OWN IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS... NERVOUS, PREOCCUPIED, KIM DOESN'T NOTICE THE ABNORMAL INCREASE IN TEMPERATURE CAUSED BY HIS NEIGHBOUR'S MANIPULATIONS...



No choice! I must lower the tests' strength. It'll work until it doesn't!...



THE PROFESSOR INSERTS THE COMPONENTS BACK INTO THEIR LODGINGS FOR THE HUNDREDTH TIME WHEN SUDDENLY THE SIGNAL HE'D BEEN LOOKING FOR APPEARS ON THE OSCILLOGRAPH'S SCREEN!

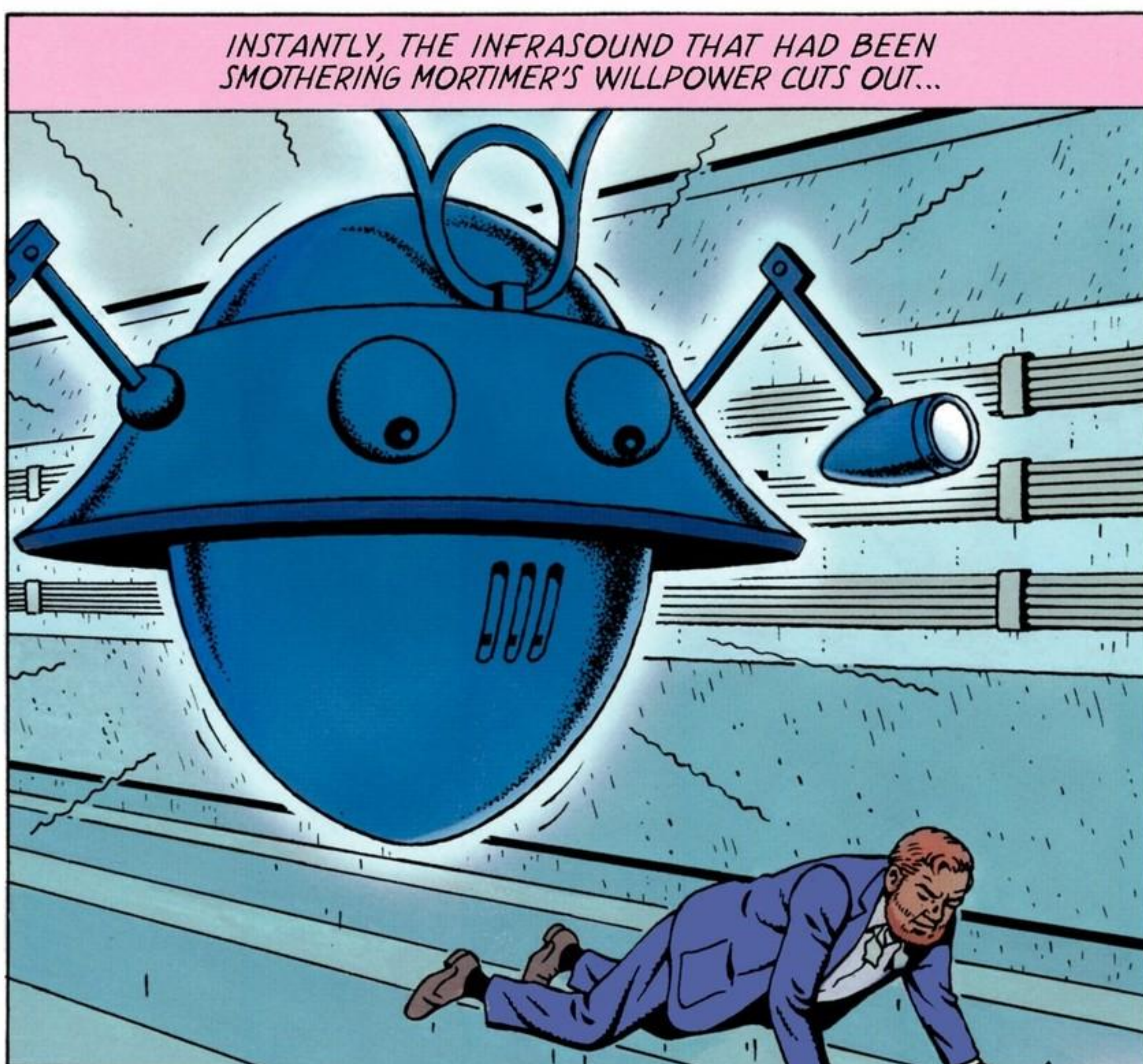
AT LAST!!!



IMMEDIATELY HE TUNES THE INTERPHONE'S MIKE TO THE NEW FREQUENCY AND GIVES SAMURAI THE SECRET STANDBY ORDER...

ŌJŌSHIRO*!

*SHUT DOWN!

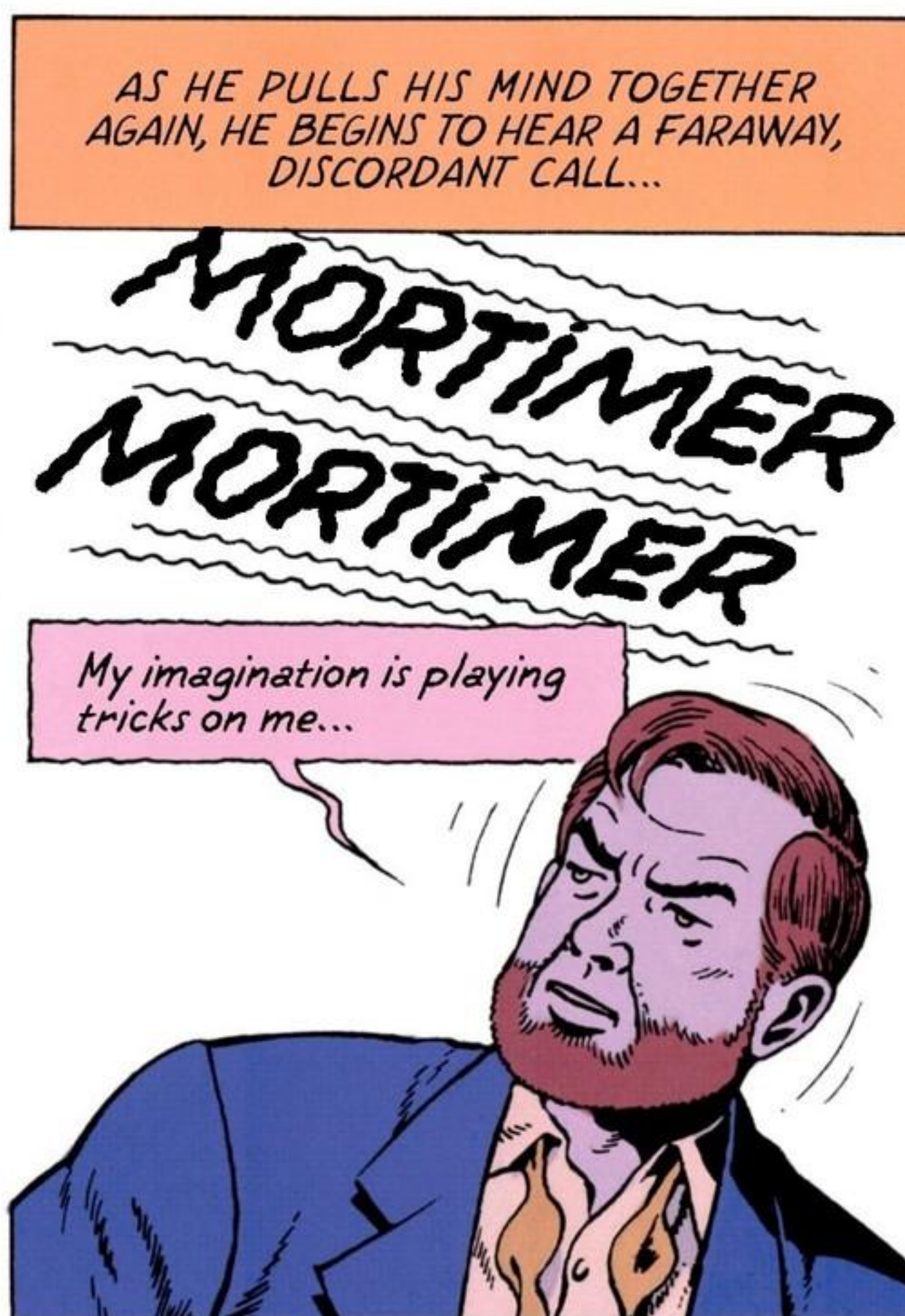


INSTANTLY, THE INFRASOUND THAT HAD BEEN SMOTHERING MORTIMER'S WILLPOWER CUTS OUT...



...ALLOWING THE PRISONER TO EMERGE FROM HIS STUPOR...

What ... happened ... to me?...



AS HE PULLS HIS MIND TOGETHER AGAIN, HE BEGINS TO HEAR A FARAWAY, DISCORDANT CALL...

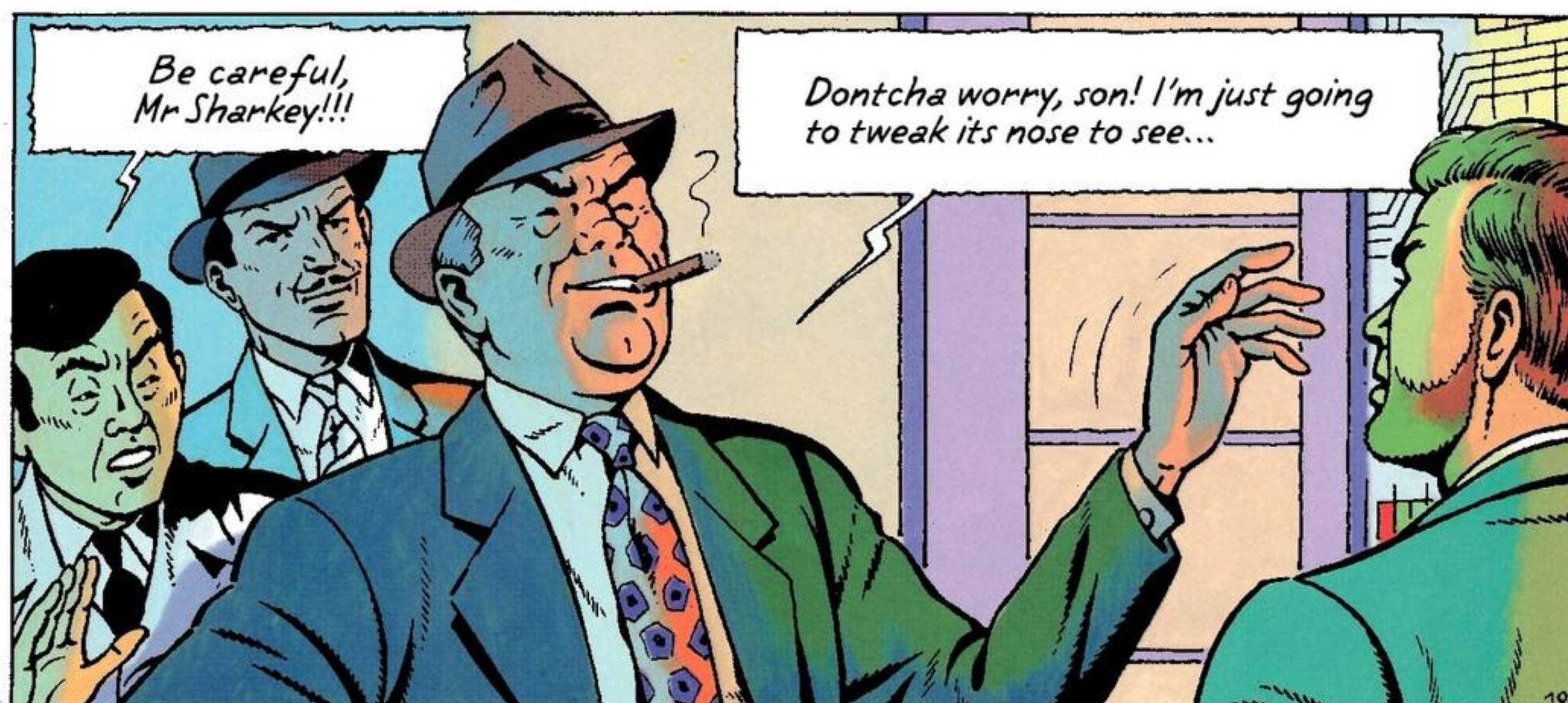
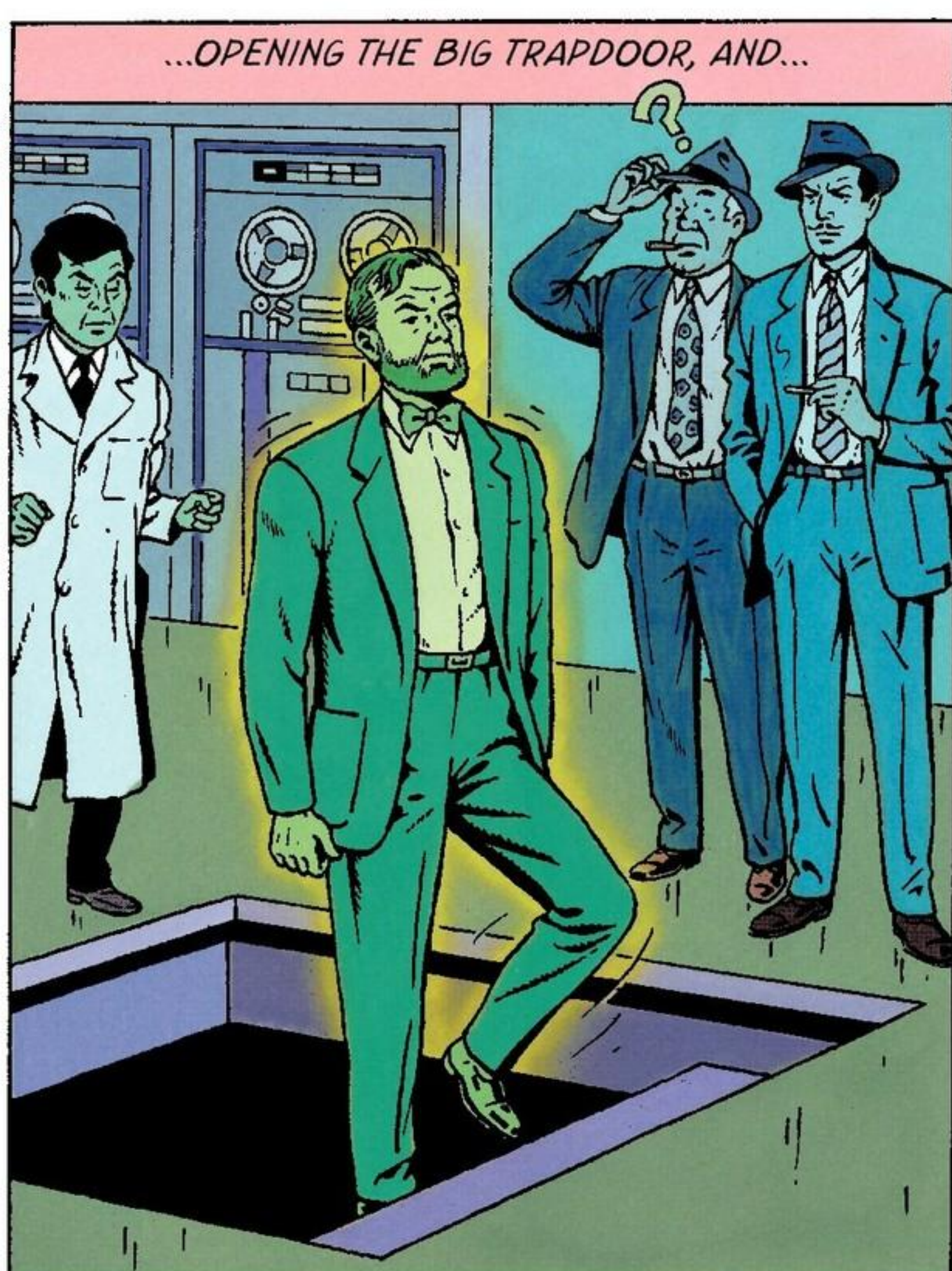
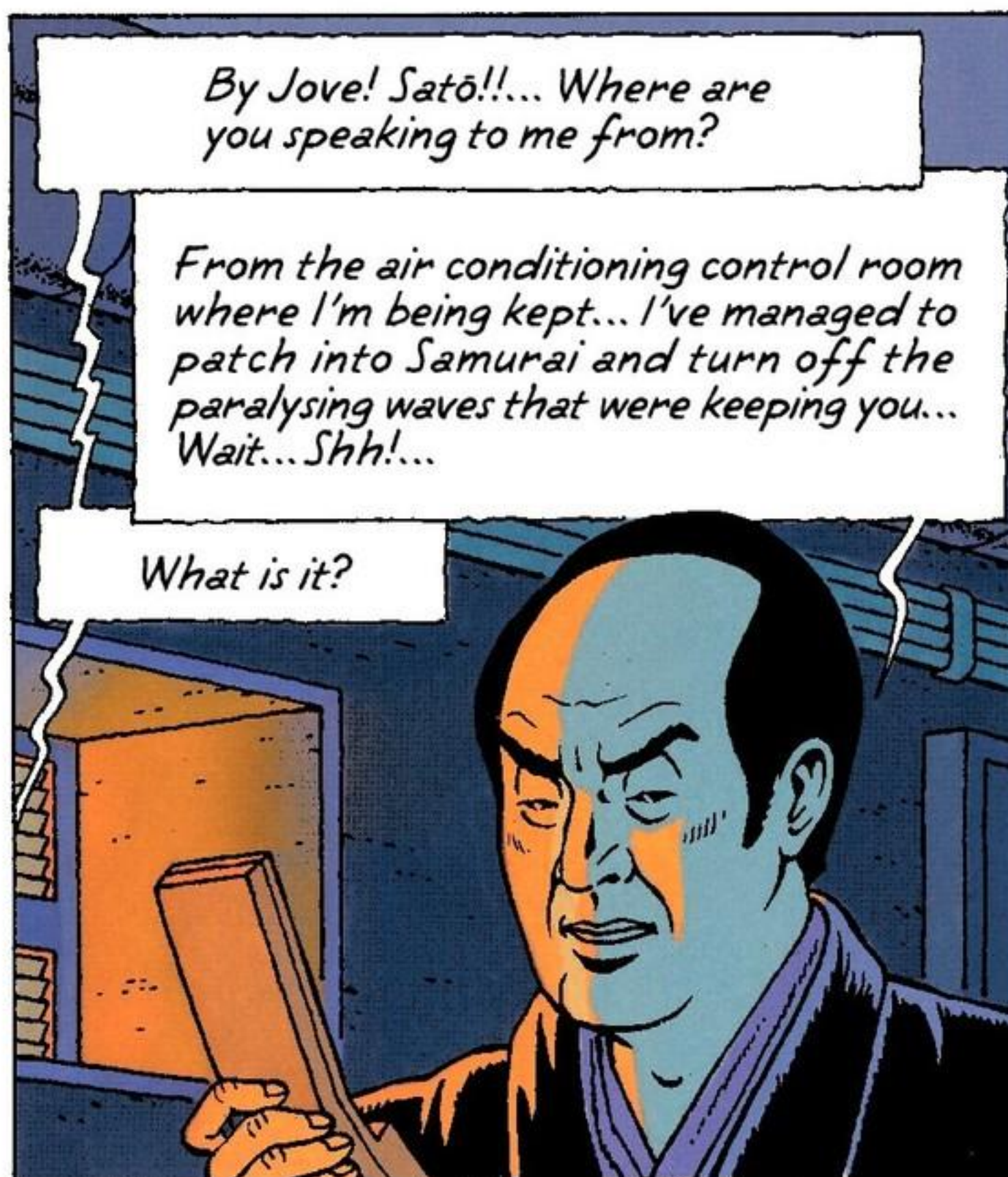
MORTIMER
MORTIMER

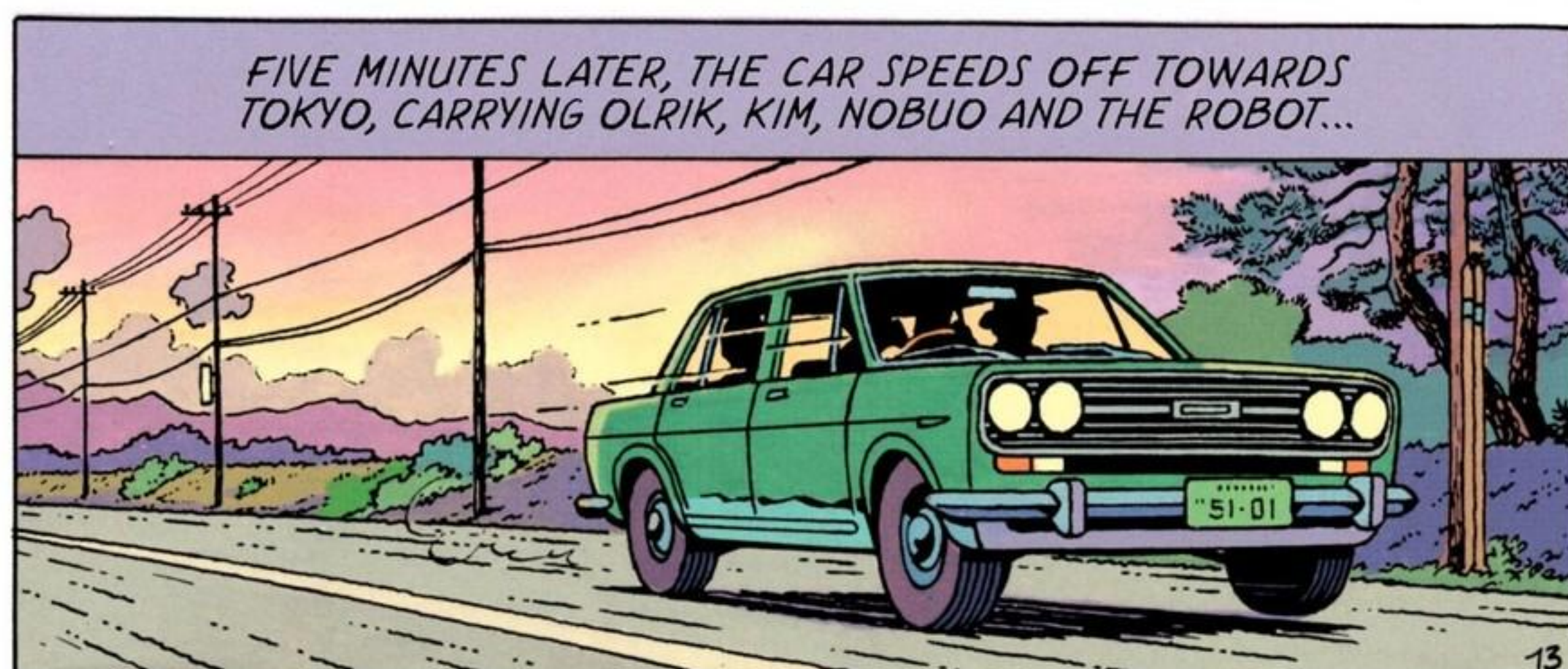
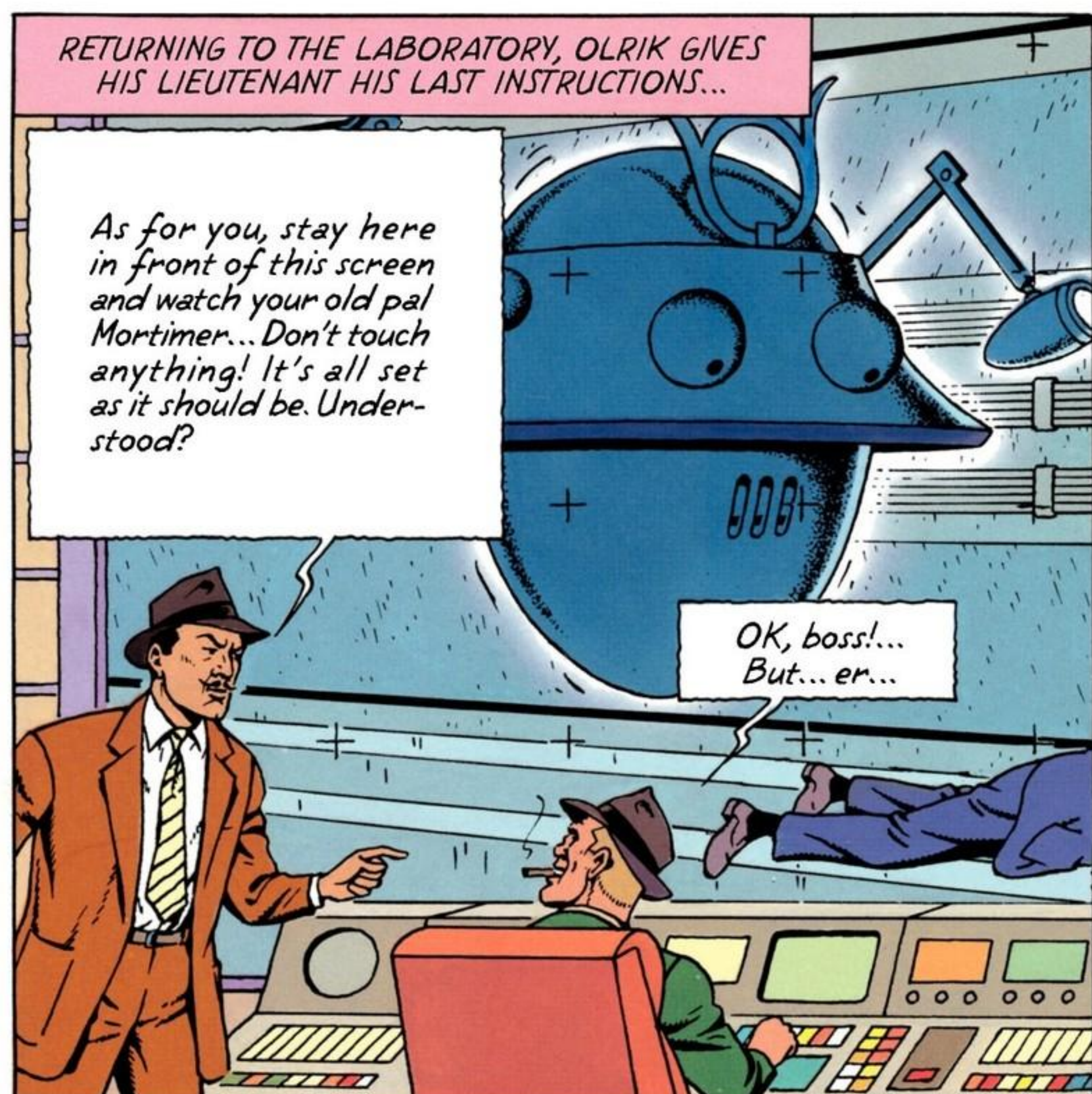
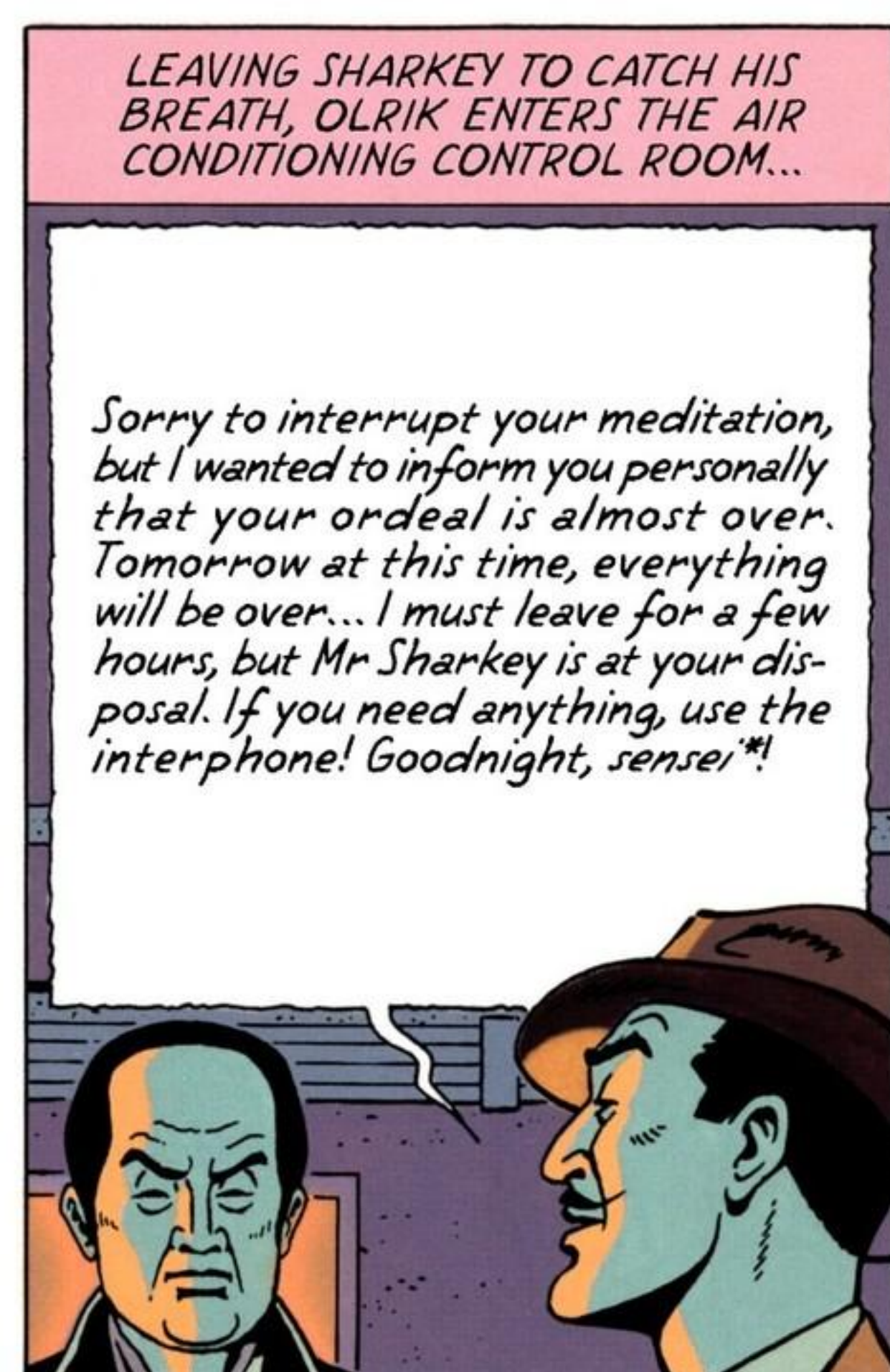
My imagination is playing tricks on me...



MORTIMER!...

No, wait!... That voice is coming from Samurai!?!





*TEACHER' – AN HONORIFIC USED TO ADDRESS A FIGURE OF AUTHORITY, PARTICULARLY A PROFESSOR OR A MASTER.

IGNORING HIS SPECTACULAR SURROUNDINGS, SHARKEY WATCHES THE MOVIE WITH RAPT ATTENTION...

If it was me, I'd slap her silly, that nasty piece of work of a queen!!!

BUT PROFESSOR SATO IS ALREADY BACK AT WORK...

Now's the time. Let's start by jamming the TV circuit...

THE EFFECT IS ALMOST IMMEDIATE...

Hey! What's gotten into this damned thing?! Just during the best bit, too...

CRRRRR CRRRRR

Rats! And now it's that pain in the neck Mortimer vanishing!!!

LEAVING THE GANGSTER TO HIS OUTRAGE, SATO ALERTS HIS FRIEND THROUGH SAMURAI...

Get up, Mortimer! I've disrupted the TV surveillance... Listen carefully and be ready to act...

Go ahead!

Olrik and his gang are on their way to Tokyo. They plan to use a robot in your image to murder your friend Blake this very night...

Great Scott!!!

Only you can save him, but first you must escape. Here's how: the air duct that runs above the ceiling leads to an opening in the cliff face, less than nine feet above a small platform. From there you'll have no trouble making it to the woods that surround the villa... and then, hidden in the undergrowth, you can reach the outer wall... However, steer clear of Kim's pavilion. The bandits have turned it into their guard-house...

MEANWHILE, A FURIOUS SHARKEY GNASHES HIS TEETH BEFORE THE COMMAND CONSOLE...

Don't touch anything! It's all set!... Easy for him to say... What if there's something fishy behind this?!

AT THE IDEA, THE PANICKED BRUISER DEFIES HIS ORDERS AND RISKS PRESSING A FEW BUTTONS...

I'm sure it's nothing and I can sort it out easily...

UNFORTUNATELY, HIS BLIND MANIPULATIONS SOON RESULT IN TECHNICAL HAVOC, TRANSLATING INTO STARTLING EFFECTS...

Oh! What the blazes is that?!...

SHARKEY HAS JUST TURNED ON THE ELECTRONIC PARTHENOGENESIS LINE, WHICH IMMEDIATELY BEGINS ANARCHICALLY FABRICATING AN ARMY OF ABERRANT MORTIMERS!...



Oh boy! It's even worse than Frankenstein!!! Never mind the orders — I have to head down to see what's going on!



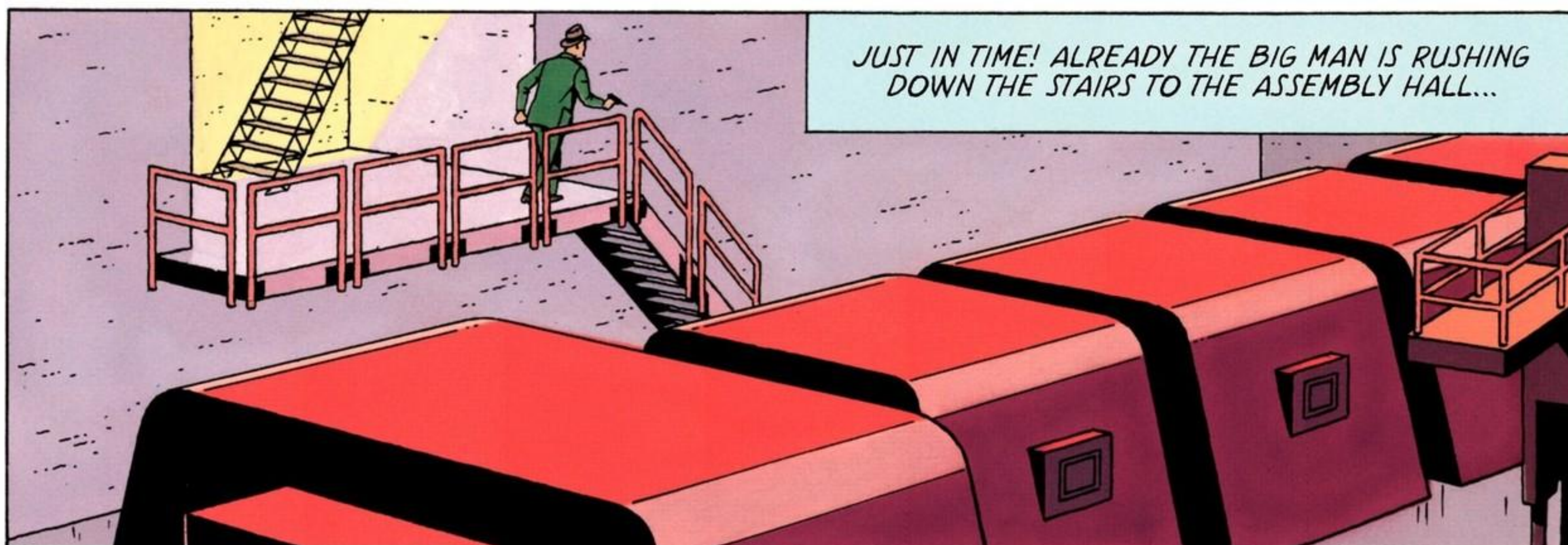
This is what Kim pressed to open the trapdoor.



Get ready! Sharkey's coming!



JUST IN TIME! ALREADY THE BIG MAN IS RUSHING DOWN THE STAIRS TO THE ASSEMBLY HALL...



...AND MOMENTS LATER BURSTS INTO THE TUBE THAT DOUBLES AS MORTIMER'S CELL...



HOWEVER, HE CAN'T RESIST WALKING UP TO HIS INCAPACITATED ENEMY TO MOCK HIM...

Ha! Ha! This time, buddy, even your egghead's brain won't get you out of here!

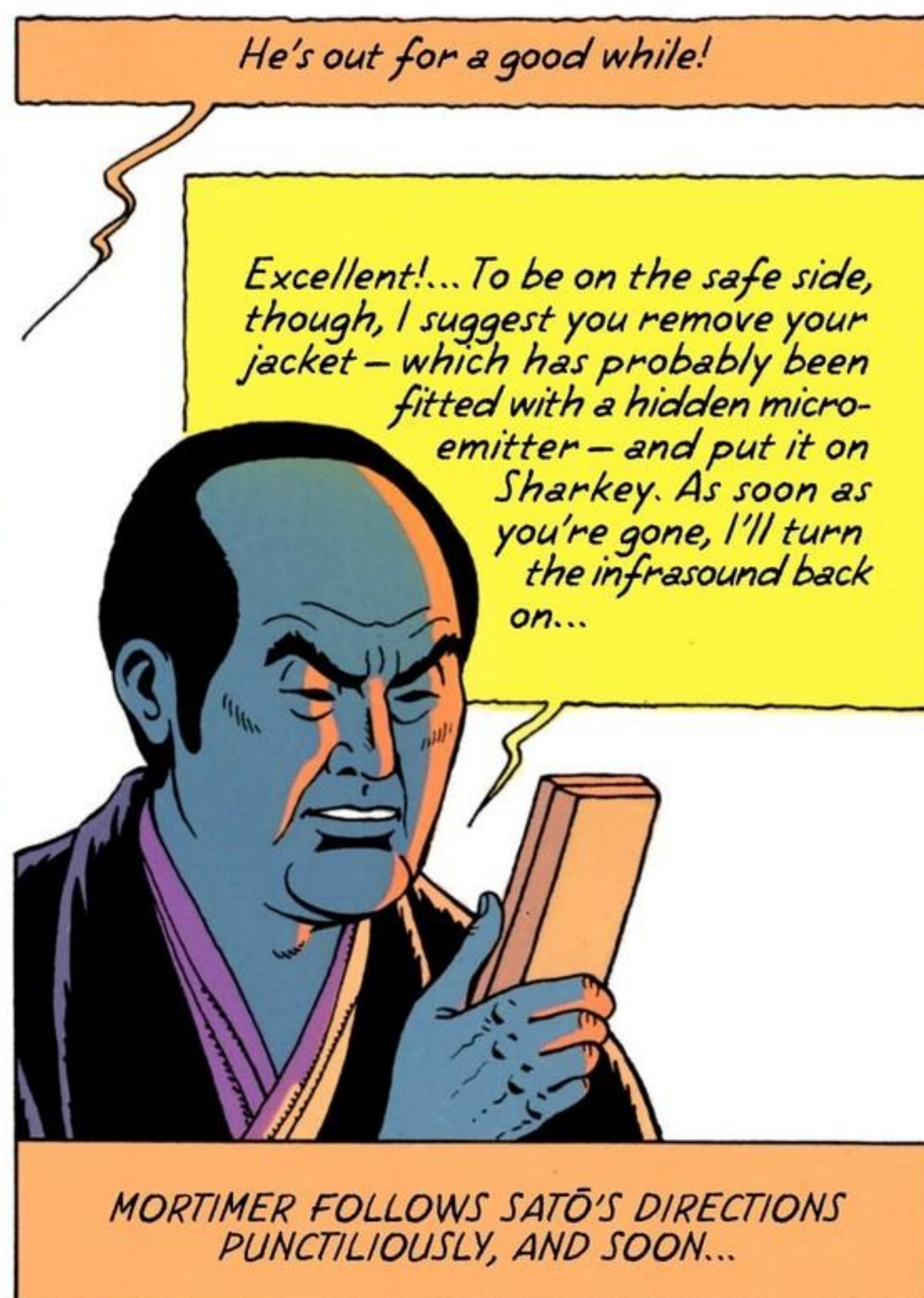


I'll see you later, then — for the final act!

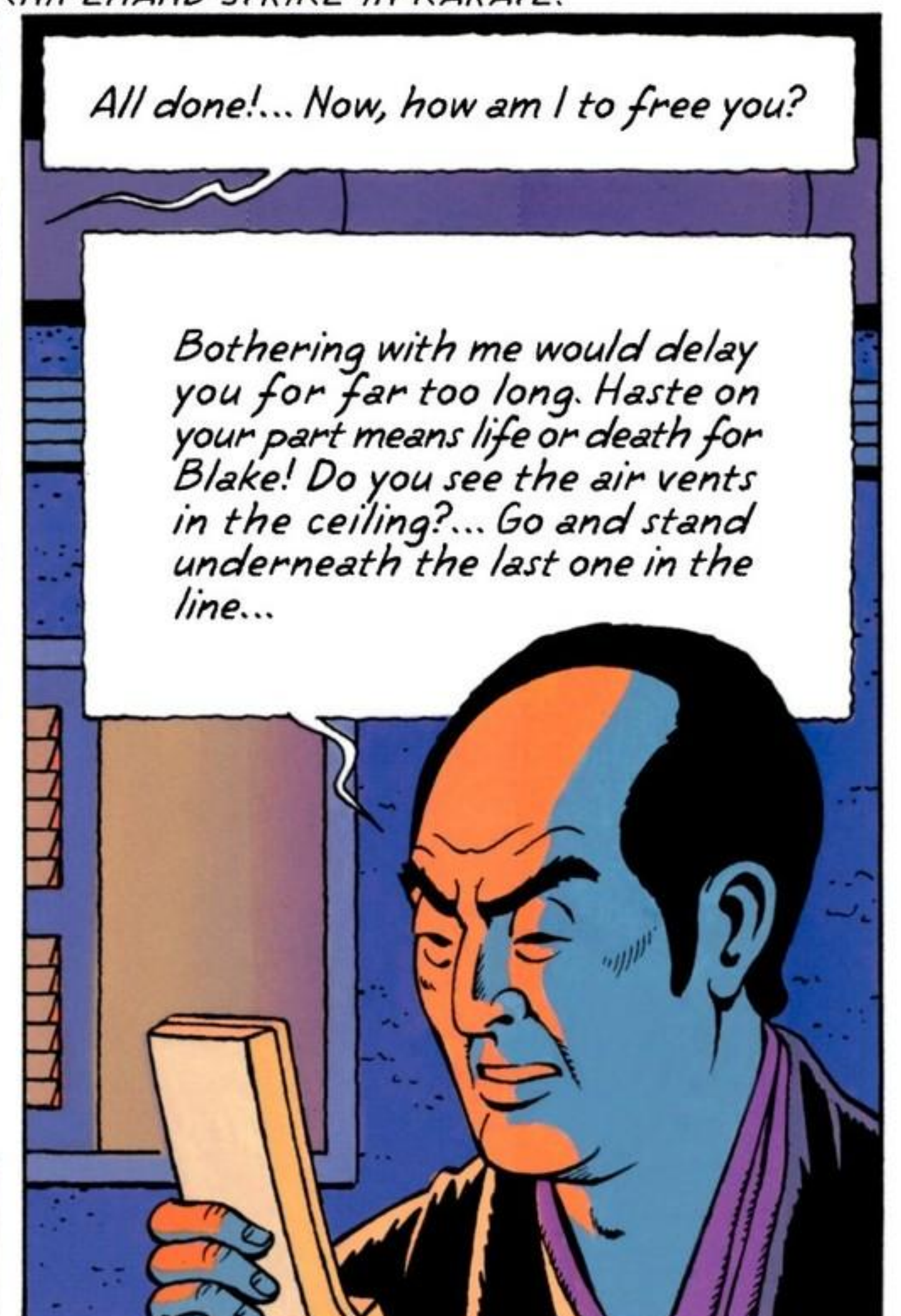




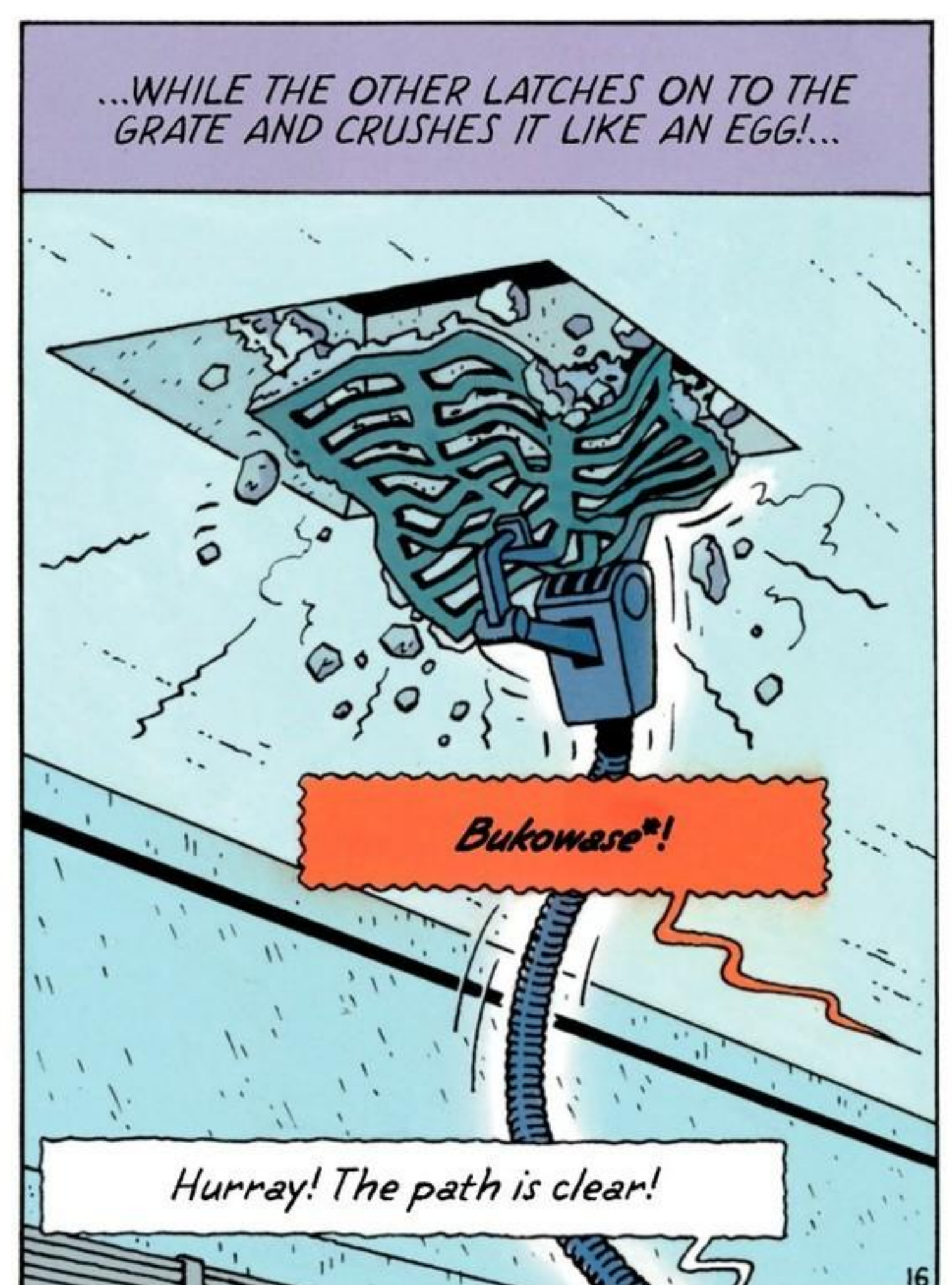
*KNIFEHAND STRIKE IN KARATE.



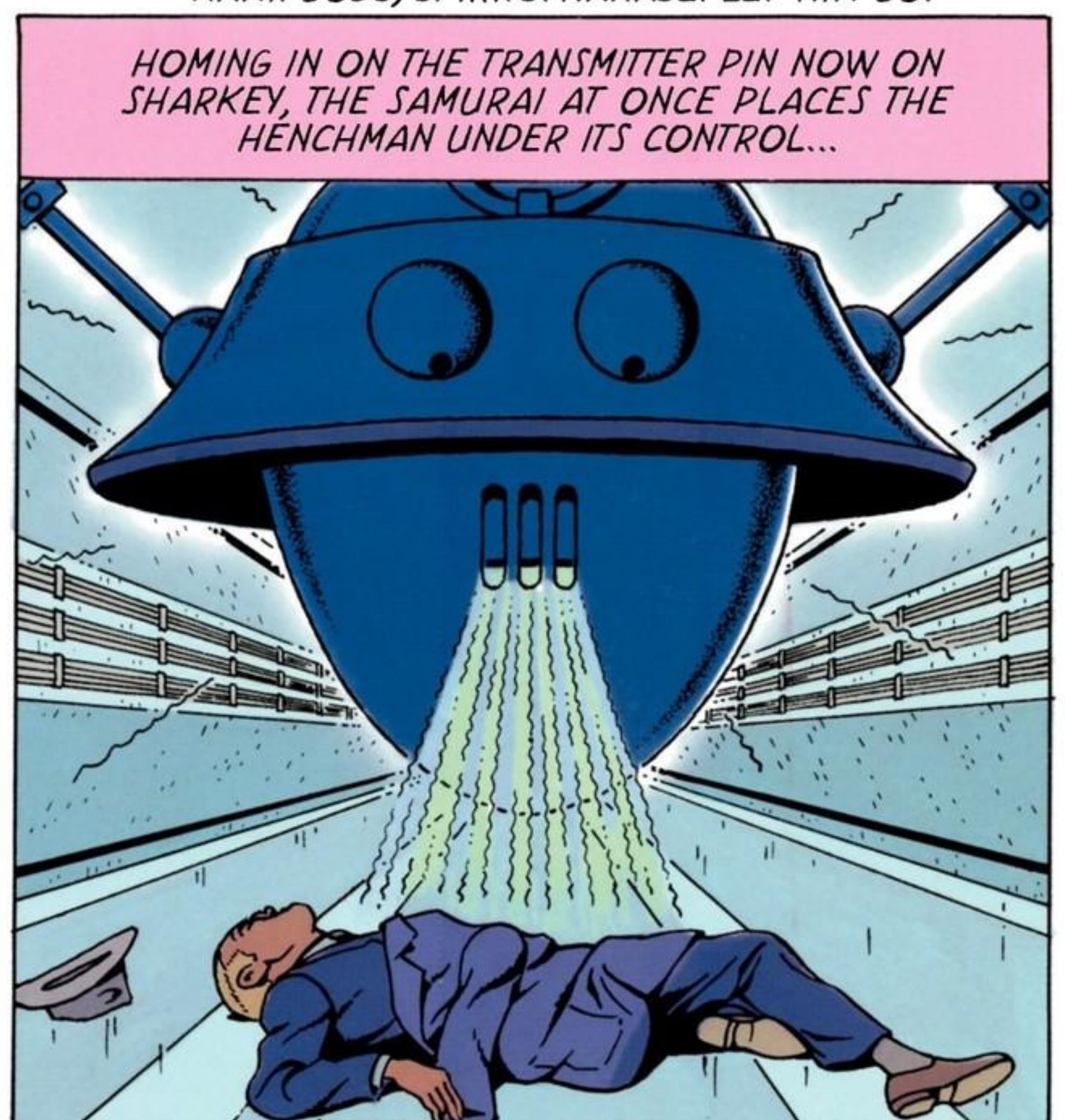
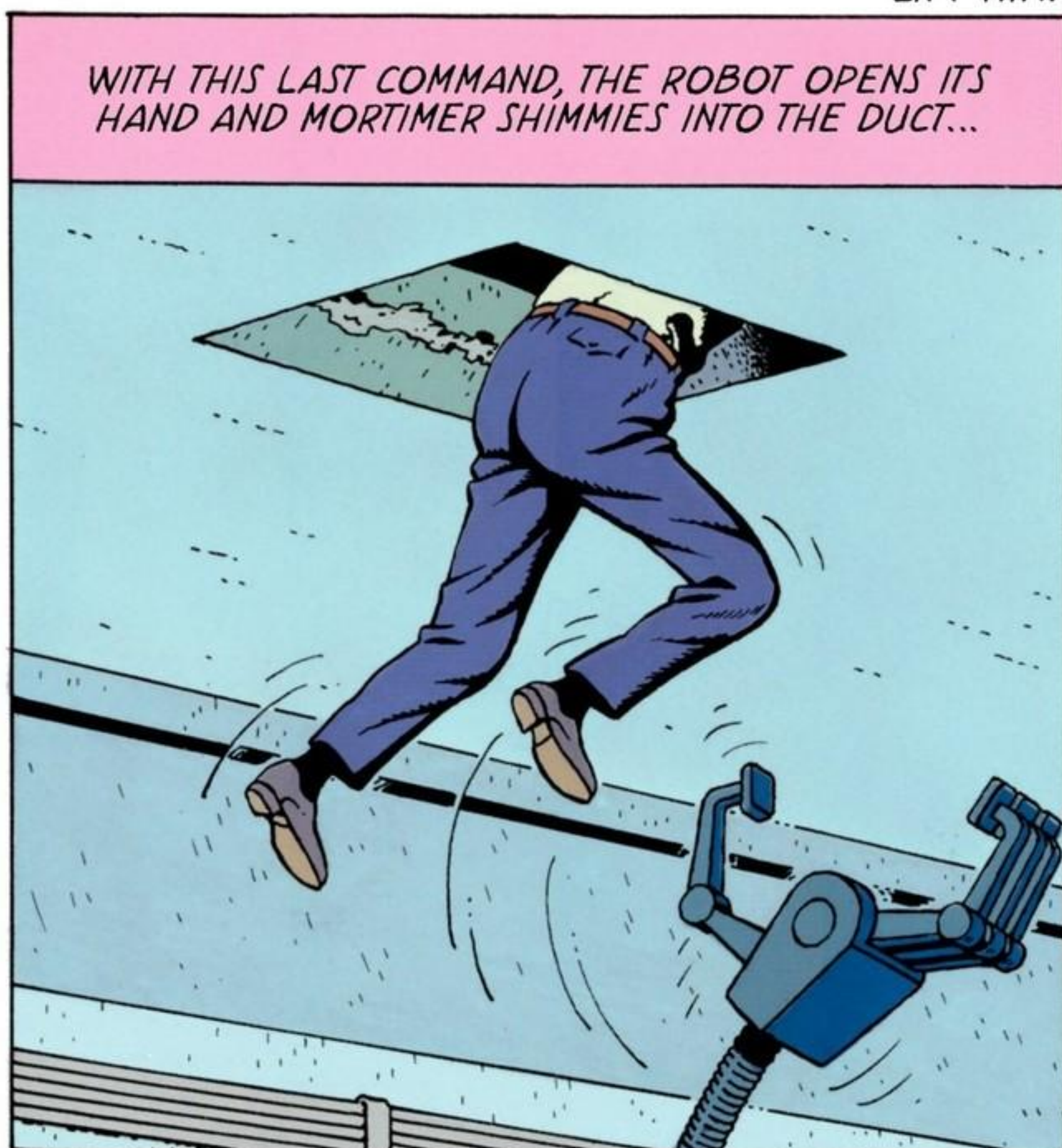
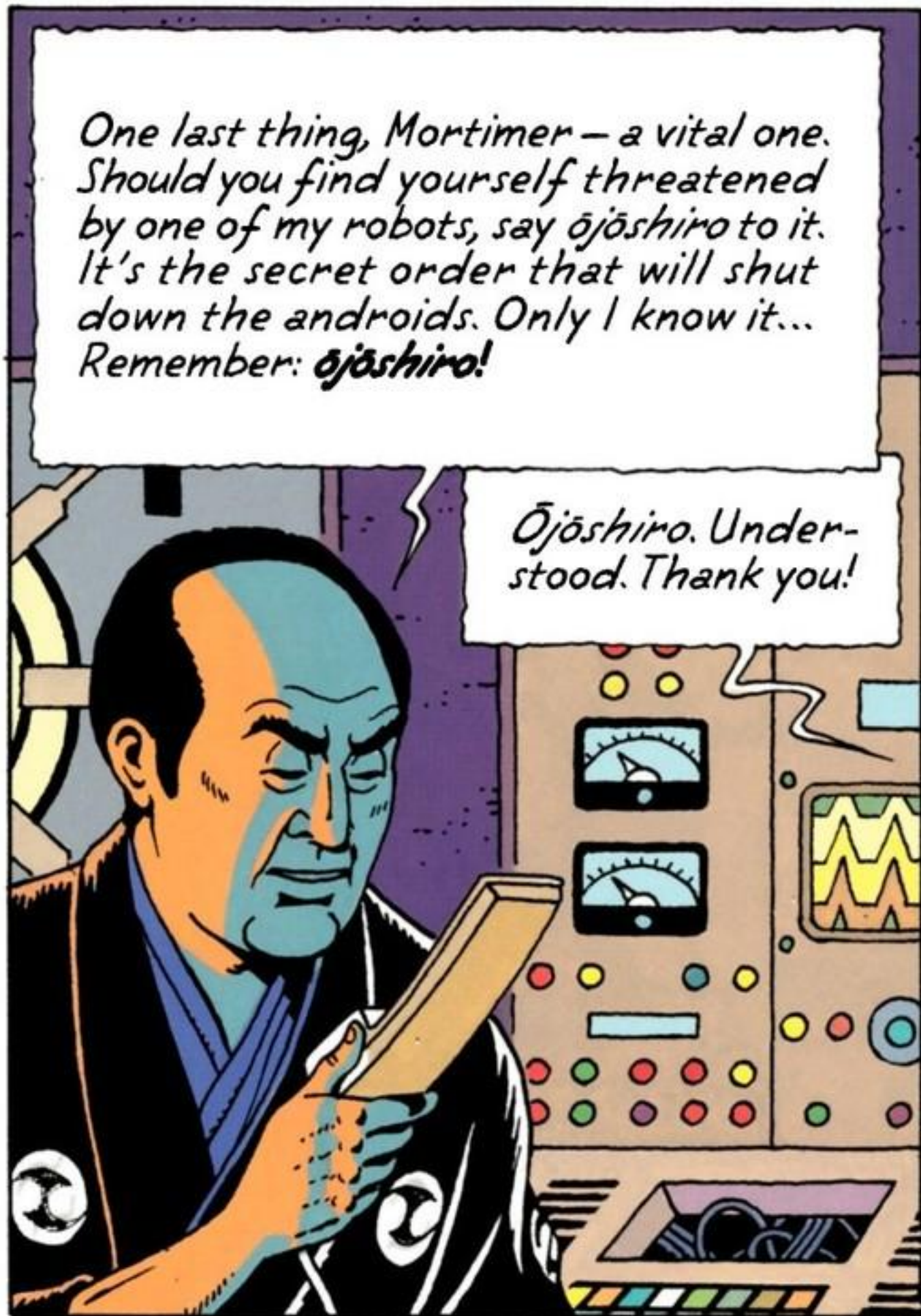
MORTIMER FOLLOWS SATO'S DIRECTIONS PUNCTILIOUSLY, AND SOON...



*GRAB HIM!



*DESTROY THIS!





*THE DIE IS CAST – A LATIN PHRASE ATTRIBUTED TO JULIUS CAESAR IN 49 BC AS HE LED HIS ARMY ACROSS THE RUBICON RIVER IN NORTHERN ITALY.

...THE TAXI, ITS LIGHTS OUT, GHOSTS
AROUND A CORNER OF THE PATH...



...AND COMES TO AN ABRUPT STOP AGAINST THE GATE, JUST AS THE GUARDS
SHAKE OFF THEIR CONFUSION AND RUSH FORWARD, READY TO OPEN FIRE...



No one!?!

Empty!?!



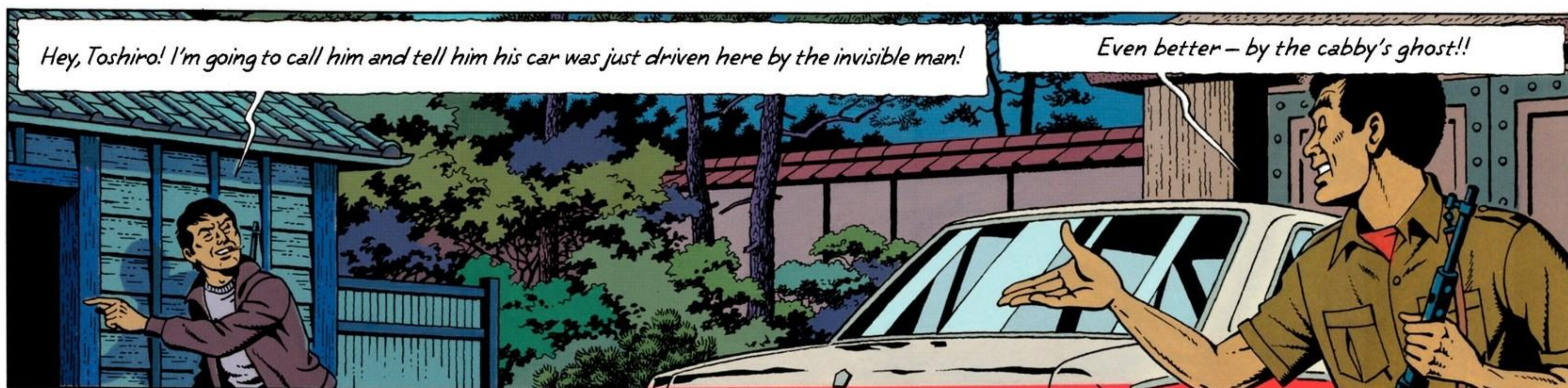
Ha! Ha! I get it! Gosho must have
forgotten to put on the handbrake
after he went for supplies...

He's usually so careful!
Being around gaijin isn't
good for him!...



Hey, Toshiro! I'm going to call him and tell him his car was just driven here by the invisible man!

Even better – by the cabby's ghost!!



BUT NO SOONER HAS HIS COUNTER-
PART DISAPPEARED THAN A MUFFLED
CRY ALERTS THE SENTRY...

Toshiro!

Har!?!



WORRIED, HE RUNS INSIDE THE GUARD HUT, BUT...



Well! I'm rather happy with how my plan worked out!



WITH THAT DONE, MORTIMER HURRIES TO OPEN THE GATE...



...AND SECONDS LATER...



...HURTLES DOWN THE HILL AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE NIGHT!



AT THAT EXACT MOMENT, OLRİK AND HIS COMMANDO ENTER SHINAGAWA KU*...

We're clear, then? As soon as we get there, you, Nobuo, will go and ask for Blake. If he's out, watch for his return and let me know the moment he's back...



*A POPULAR DISTRICT IN SOUTHERN TOKYO

The rest of us will take position in the garden and wait for your signal...

Very good, Colonel.



...AND PARKS IN THE COURTYARD, ONE LEVEL BELOW THE ACCESS RAMP...



Once our business is concluded, we'll all meet here. Careful, though! The lobby might be watched.

Don't worry, Colonel. I know the drill.



FIVE MINUTES LATER, THE CAR IS IN SIGHT OF THE NEW OTANI...

AS OLRİK, KIM AND THE ROBOT WALK INTO THE DESERTED GARDEN, A LOW RUMBLE SOUNDS IN THE DISTANCE...



Hmm, the weather's getting worse...

MEANWHILE, NOBUO HAS ENTERED THE LOBBY AND HEADED TO THE BOOKSHOP. UNDER THE PRETENCE OF PAYING FOR A MAGAZINE, HE WHISPERS TO THE CLERK...



So?

A car from the KC came to pick him up an hour ago.



Is the emitter in place?

The lift operator took care of it.

MOMENTS LATER, HE COMMUNICATES THE NEWS TO OLRİK FROM A QUIET CORNER...



...Gone to the KC?... Pity, but the plan remains the same. We'll wait... Make sure he comes back alone, however. Over!

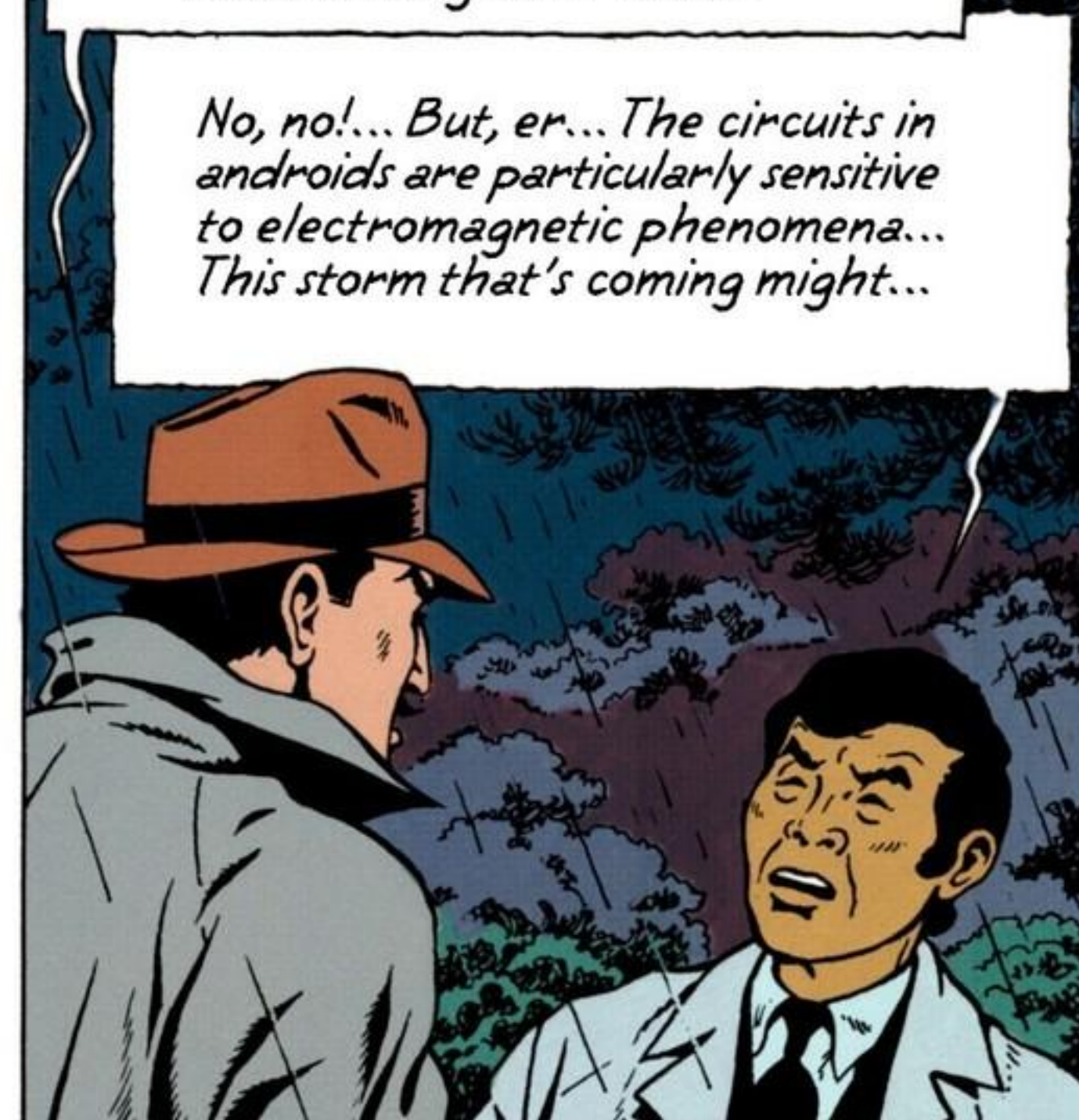
THOUGH VISIBLY ANNOYED AT THE DELAY, OLRİK CASUALLY ADDS...



Heh. Now or later — what does it matter?... The only problem is that it's starting to rain...

Actually ... It'd be better if the Englishman wasn't too long...

What? Don't tell me your tin man is allergic to rain?...



No, no!... But, er... The circuits in androids are particularly sensitive to electromagnetic phenomena... This storm that's coming might...

I hear you, Mr Kim, but storm or not, it'd be infinitely better if everything went smoothly ... if you get my meaning...?



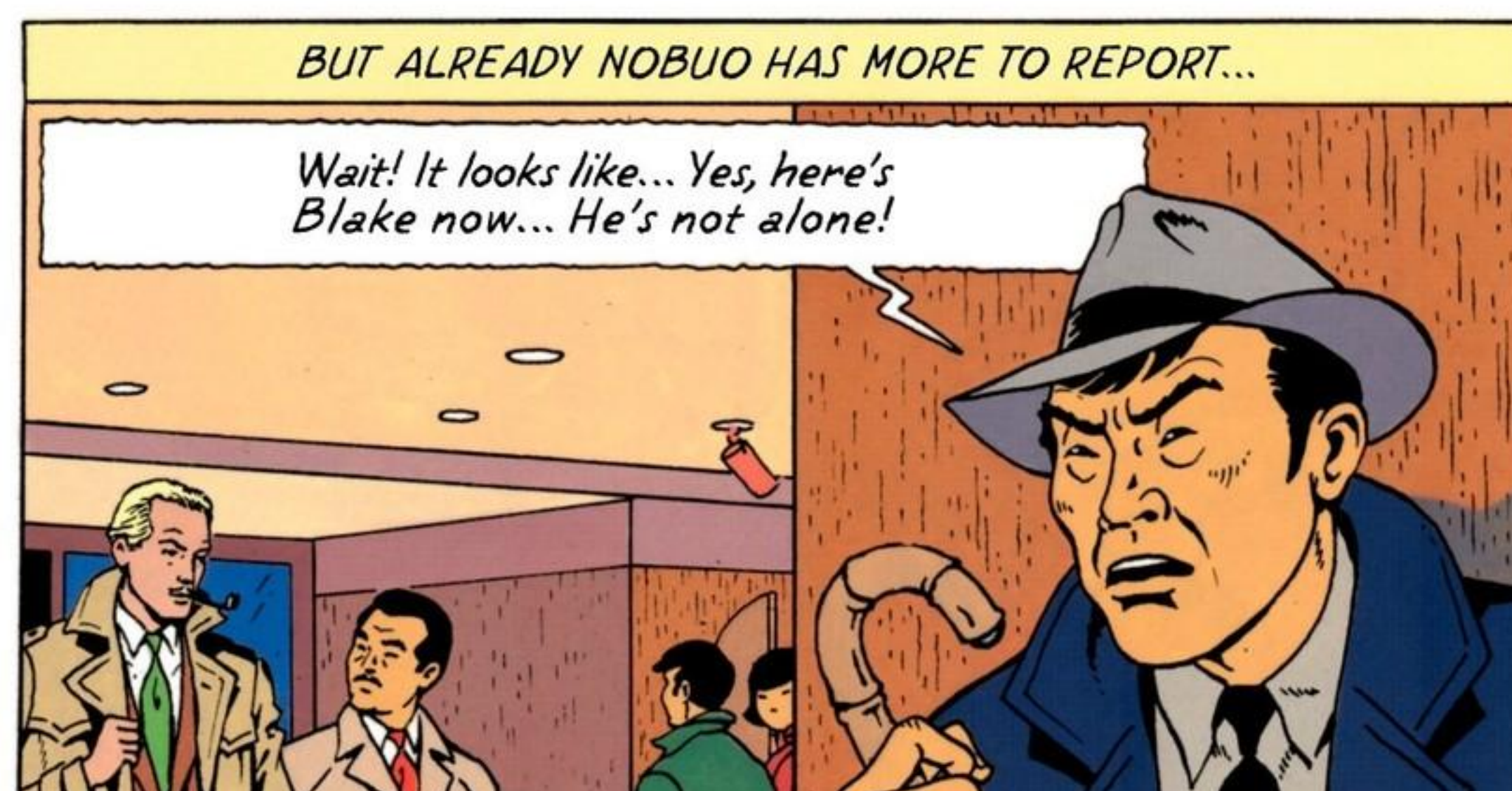
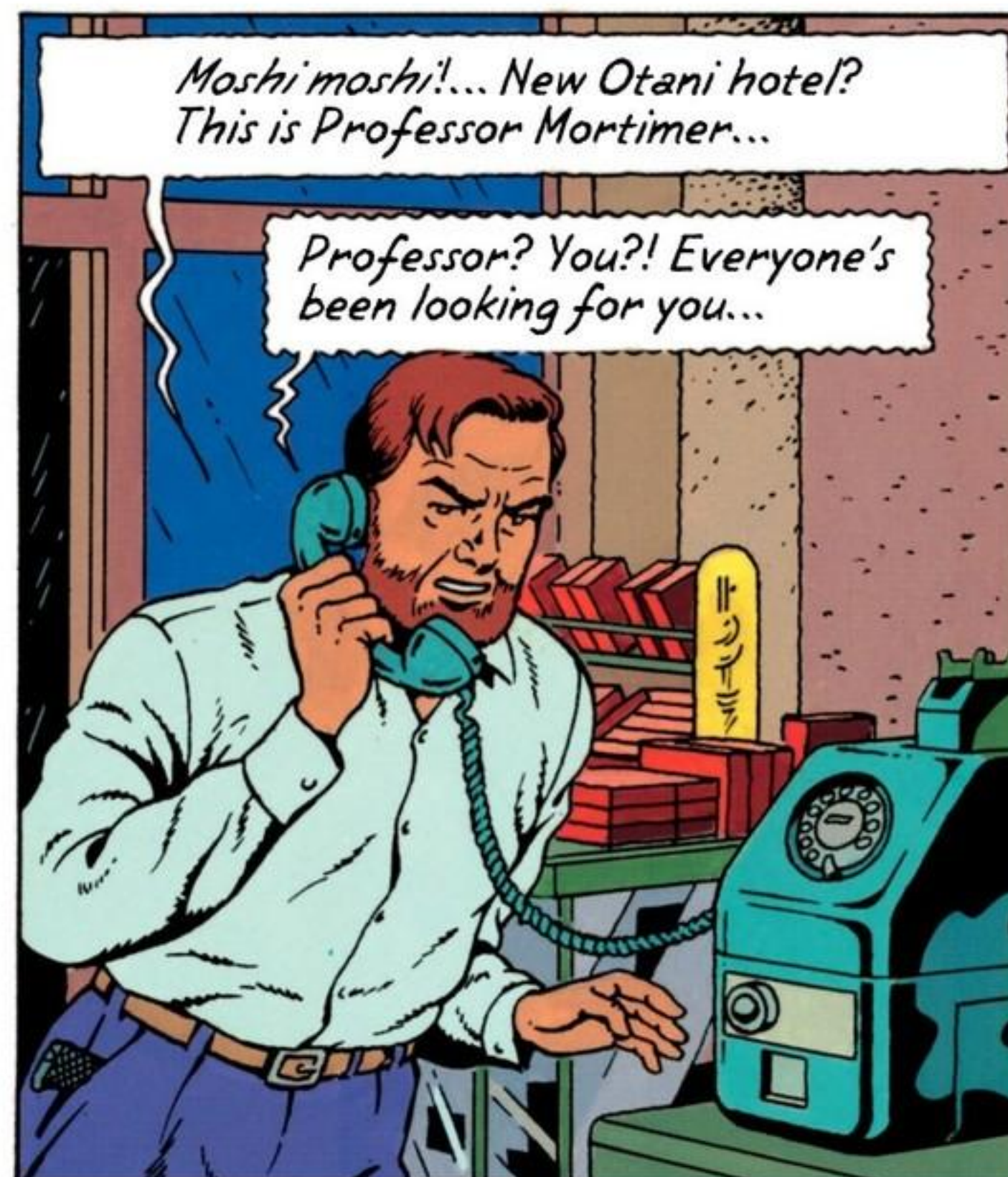
ALL THE WHILE, MORTIMER HAS BEEN FLYING TOWARDS THE CAPITAL AT FULL SPEED...

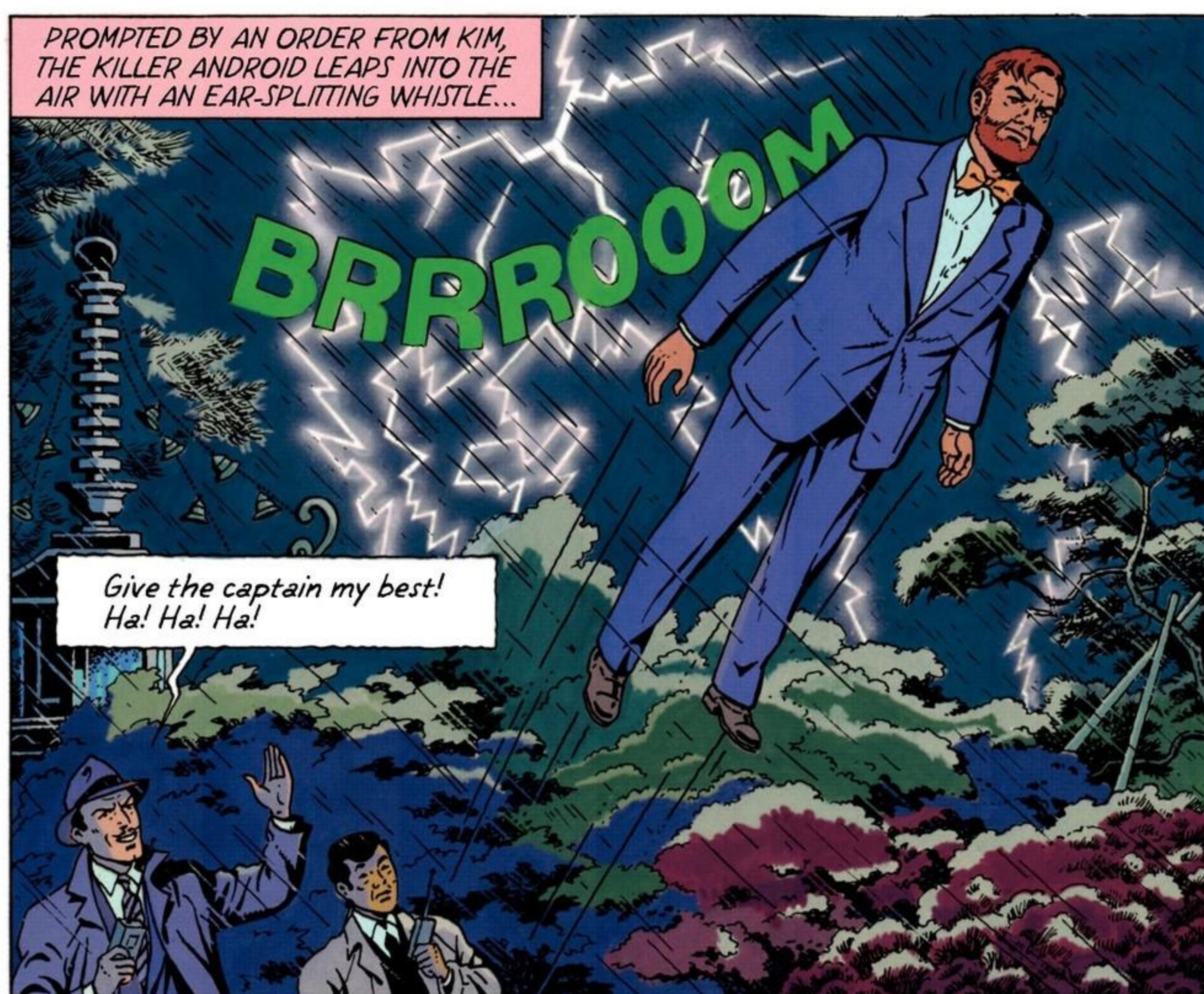


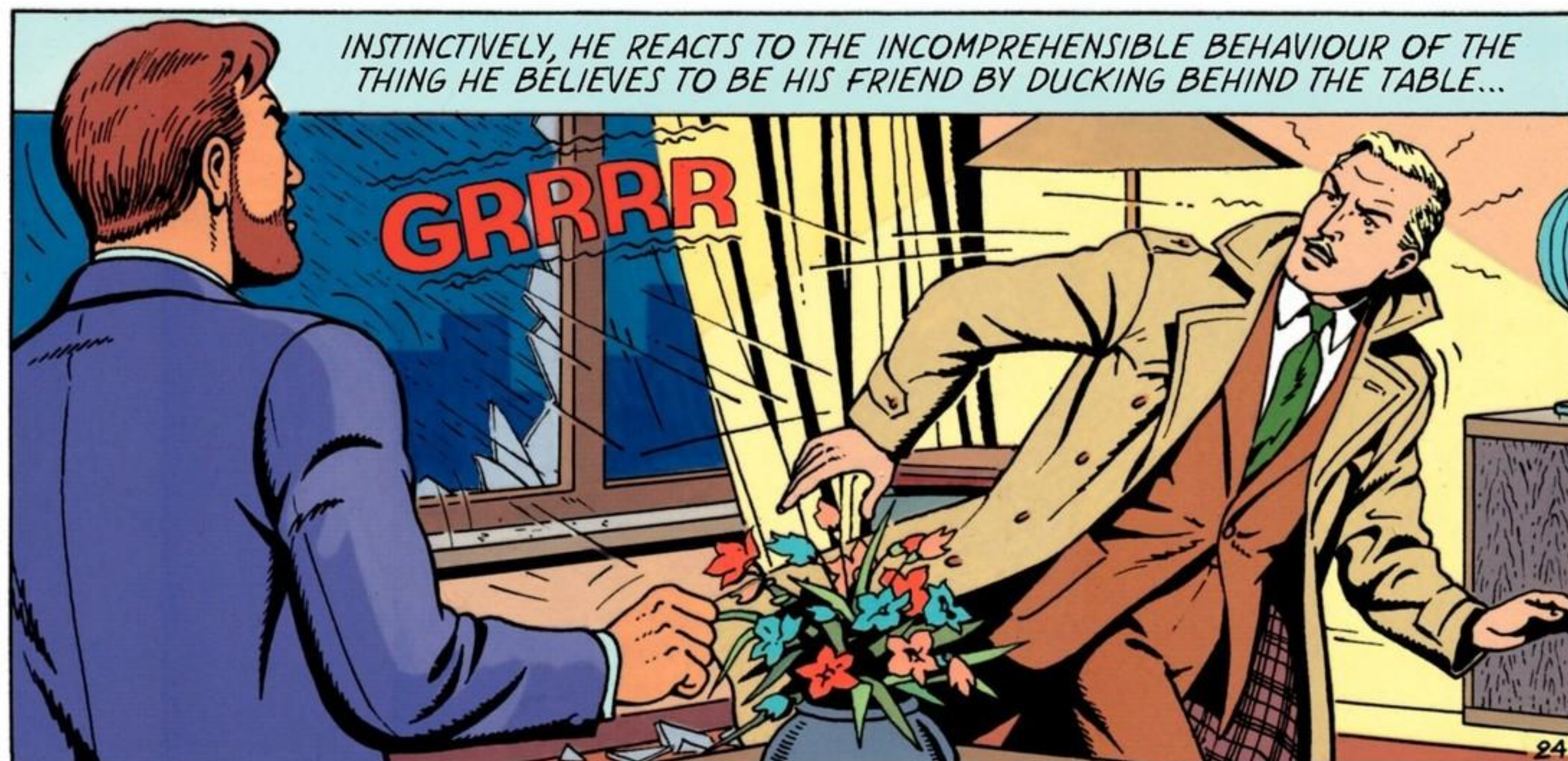
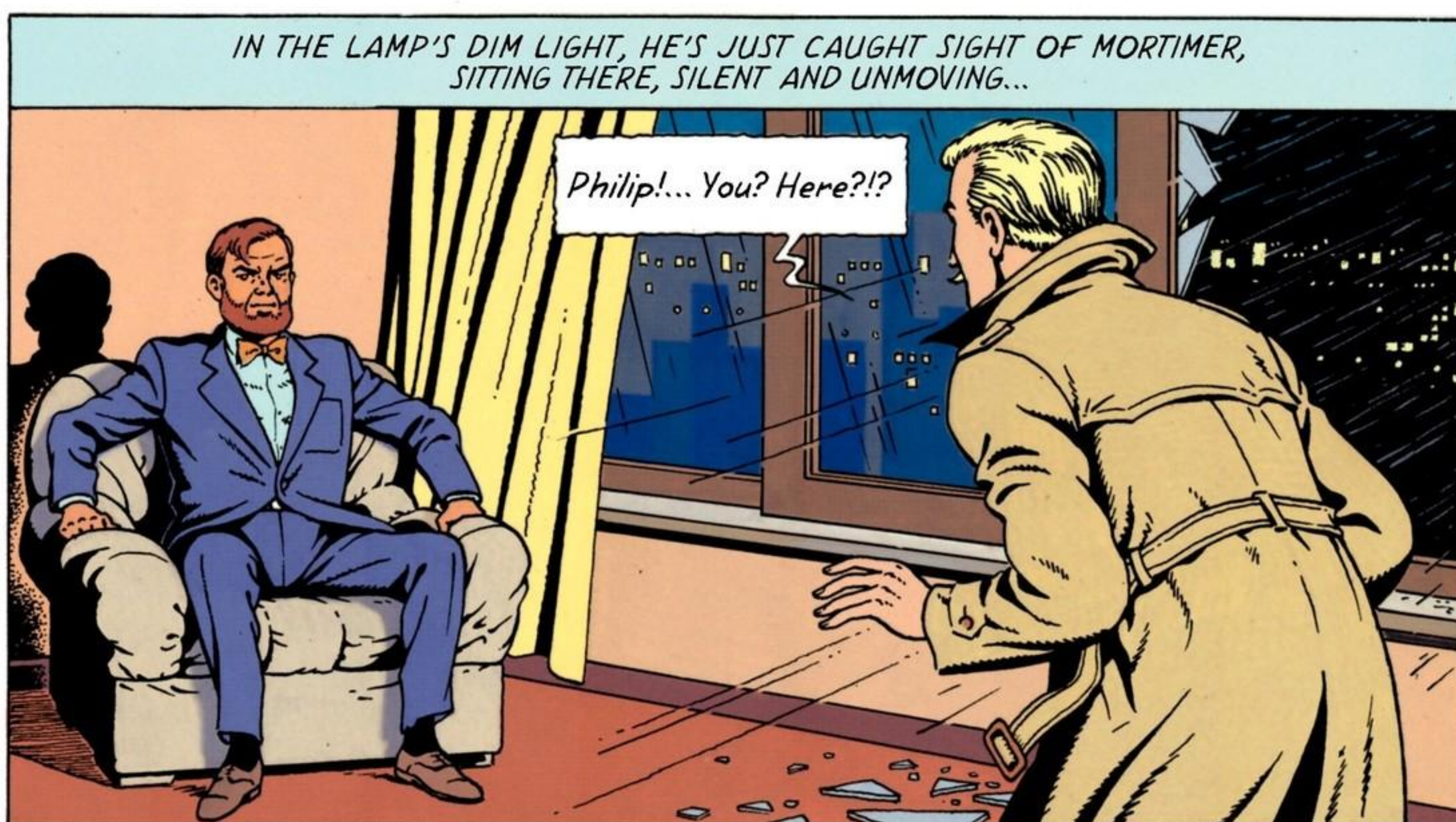
...WHEN HE SUDDENLY SEES THE TIME AT A PETROL STATION...



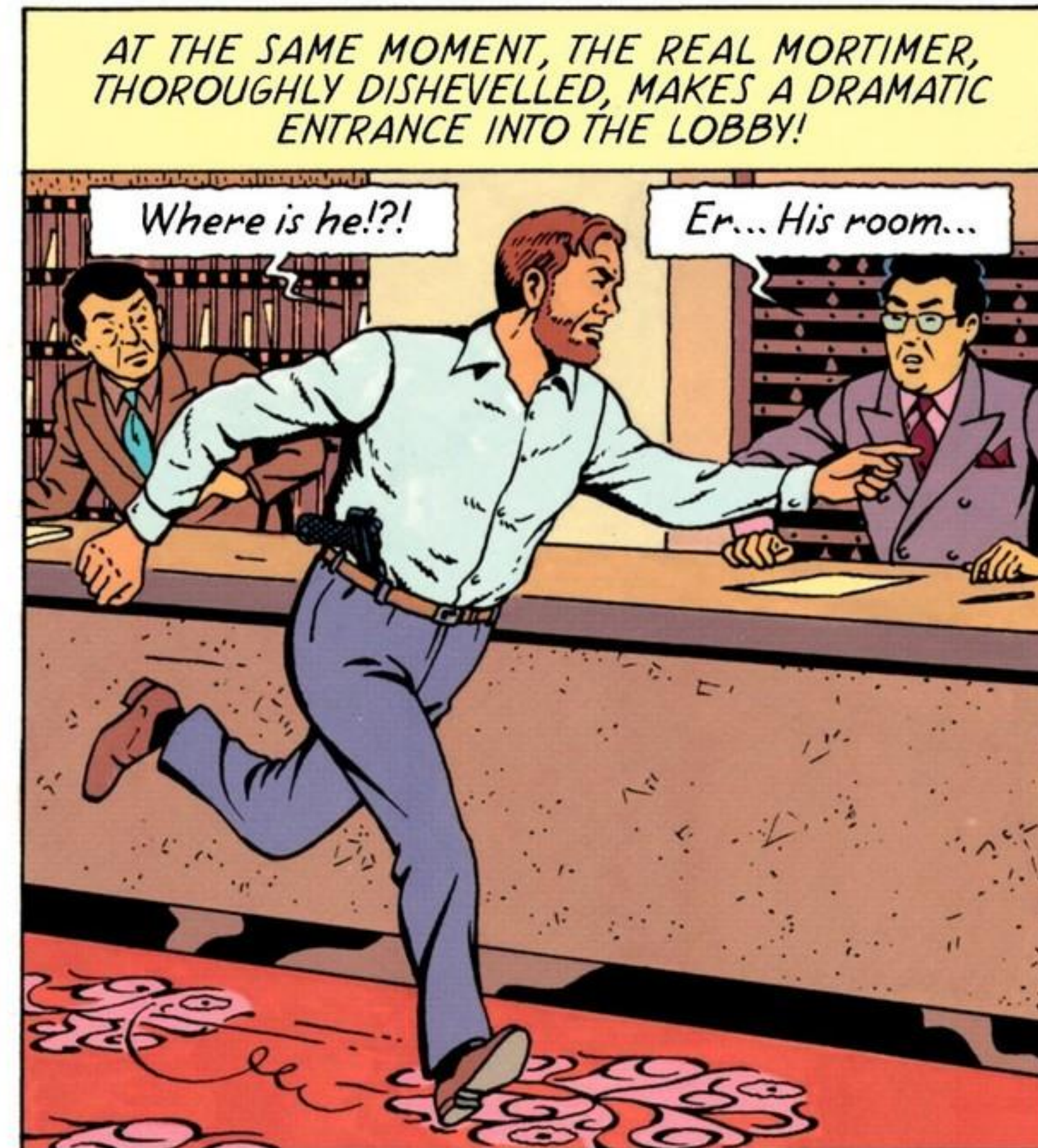
What!? Quarter to midnight already!... Blast! Why did I not think of it earlier?!



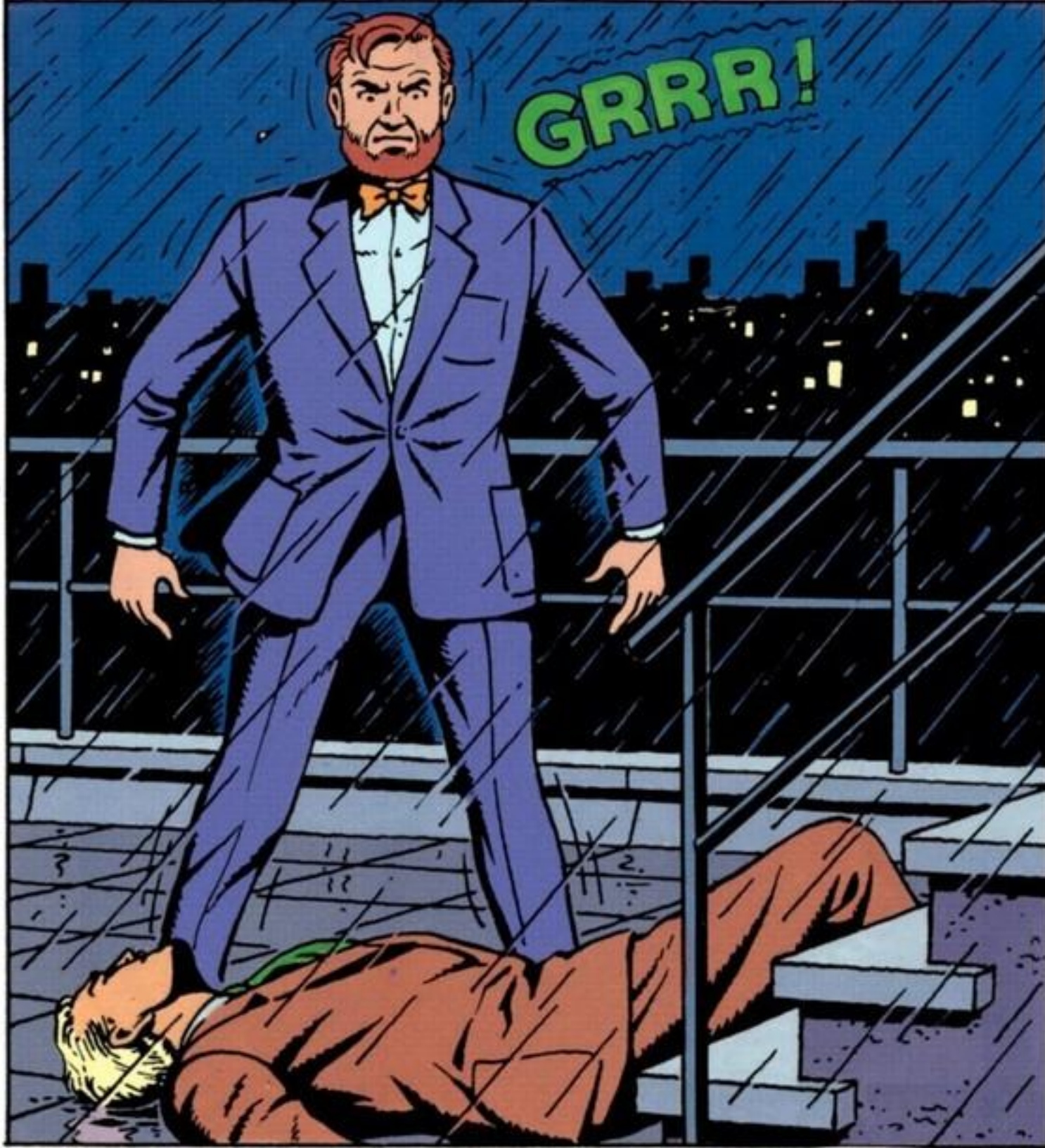








KNOCKED OUT, BLAKE LANDS AT THE FEET OF HIS RELENTLESS PURSUER...



...WHO BENDS OVER THE UNCONSCIOUS MAN, GRABS HOLD OF HIM...



...LIFTS HIM UP AS IF HE WEIGHS NOTHING ... AND, INDIFFERENT TO THE TREMORS WRACKING THE CITY...



...STEPS UP TO THE GUARD RAIL THAT SURROUNDS THE ROOF...



JUST THEN, AN ORDER SOUNDS FROM BEHIND IT, CLEAR OVER THE DIN OF THE ELEMENTS...

Ōjōshiro!!!



IT'S MORTIMER - WHO, HAVING COME UP THE STAIRS, HAS JUST BELLOWS THE ANDROID SHUTDOWN COMMAND!...

HEARING IT, THE ROBOT HAS FROZEN IN PLACE, A COUPLE OF STEPS FROM THE EDGE...



KIM, WHO FROM DOWN ON THE GROUND CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HIS ROBOT IS SUDDENLY RESTRAINED, SCREAMS IN HIS WALKIE-TALKIE...



Confound it! What's it waiting for?!?...

...WHILE MORTIMER REPEATS HIS OWN ORDER...

Ōjōshiro!



CAUGHT IN A CROSSFIRE OF SORTS, THE ANDROID APPEARS TO HESITATE...

...THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, DROPS ITS PREY!...



*KILL!

TORN BETWEEN CONFLICTING ORDERS, PERTURBED BY THE STORM, THE CONFUSED ANDROID SHUDDERS...



...THEN WHIRLS TO FACE MORTIMER WITH A LOUD GROWL...



...AND STUMBLES TOWARDS HIM... INSTINCTIVELY, OUR FRIEND PULLS OUT HIS PISTOL AND FIRES!...



THE FUTILE WEAPON IS QUICKLY BATTED AWAY, THOUGH, AND ALREADY THE MACHINE IS RAISING ITS LETHAL FIST ... WHEN ITS CONFUSED CIRCUITS SEND A COUNTER-ORDER THAT IMMOBILISES IT!...



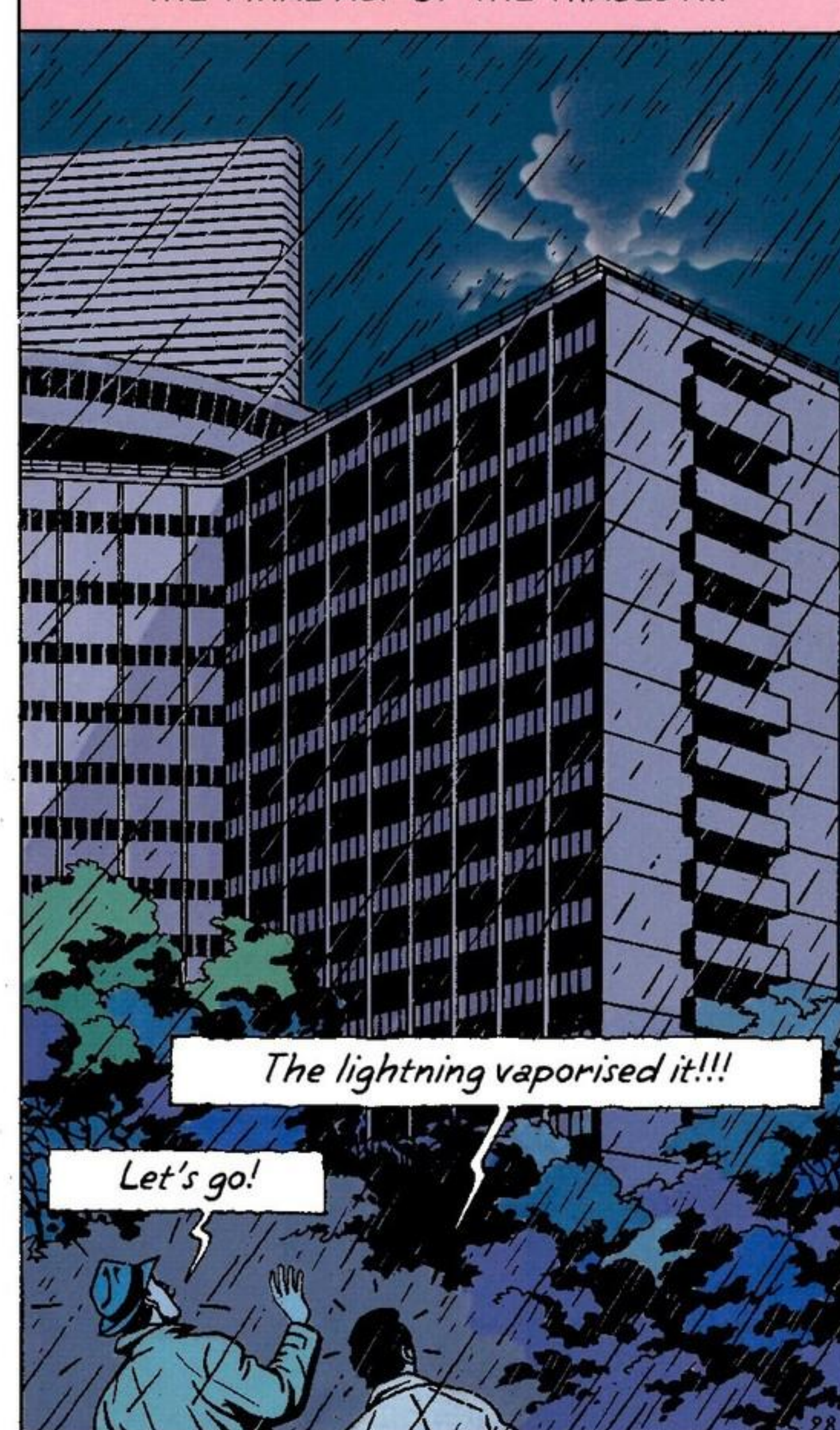
THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, THE MONSTROUS ROBOT GRABS MORTIMER AND ROCKETS INTO THE AIR!...



...A MICRO-SECOND BEFORE A BLINDING BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRIKES IT...



DUMBSTRUCK, OLRİK AND KİM HAVE WITNESSED THE FINAL ACT OF THE TRAGEDY...



TWENTY MINUTES LATER, IN THE CAR, THE THREE MEN ARE ASSESSING THE RESULTS OF THE NIGHT'S EVENTS...

Well, Nobuo?... Your report?

All is well, Colonel! I saw Blake and Mortimer's bodies being taken away...



...I also found out that one of the restaurant's waiters claimed he'd seen two men fighting on the roof, and that their altercation had ended in both of them being electrocuted at the same time. With the robot gone, though, Mortimer automatically becomes the only possible culprit!... As for the police, they seem completely baffled by what happened!



Perfect... We can consider tonight's operation a success, then. Let's move on to the next objective: recovering the third formula! We have only eight hours left to go back to Sagami, run a last check on Mortimer I, and return to Tokyo in time for the bank's opening... Because it's absolutely essential that everything is done before Mortimer's name appears in the press!



THE NEXT DAY, AT SAISEIKAI CENTRAL HOSPITAL, BLAKE APPEARS TO HAVE 'RISEN FROM THE DEAD'...

So, can I see him?

Dr Shinohara believes it's better to spare him any further emotions, at least for the moment. The shock was severe, and while his burns are only superficial, it remains a miracle that he's alive at all!... Anyway, he may be out of danger, but he's still unconscious...



What about you? How do you feel?

Perfectly fine, Colonel. I was merely knocked out when I fell, and I was rather surprised to wake up in an ambulance...



What I still don't understand is Mortimer's baffling behaviour. I simply cannot picture him seized by sudden homicidal madness...

I must agree with you, dear colleague...



...which is why I chose to cut short the media's speculation by validating the news of an accidental double death - while keeping the victims' identities off-limits. Come on, now, Superintendent Hasumi is waiting for us...

Lead the way.



MEANWHILE, IN AN ISOLATED ROOM, MORTIMER IS BABBLING IN HIS SLEEP UNDER A DOCTOR'S VIGILANT CARE...

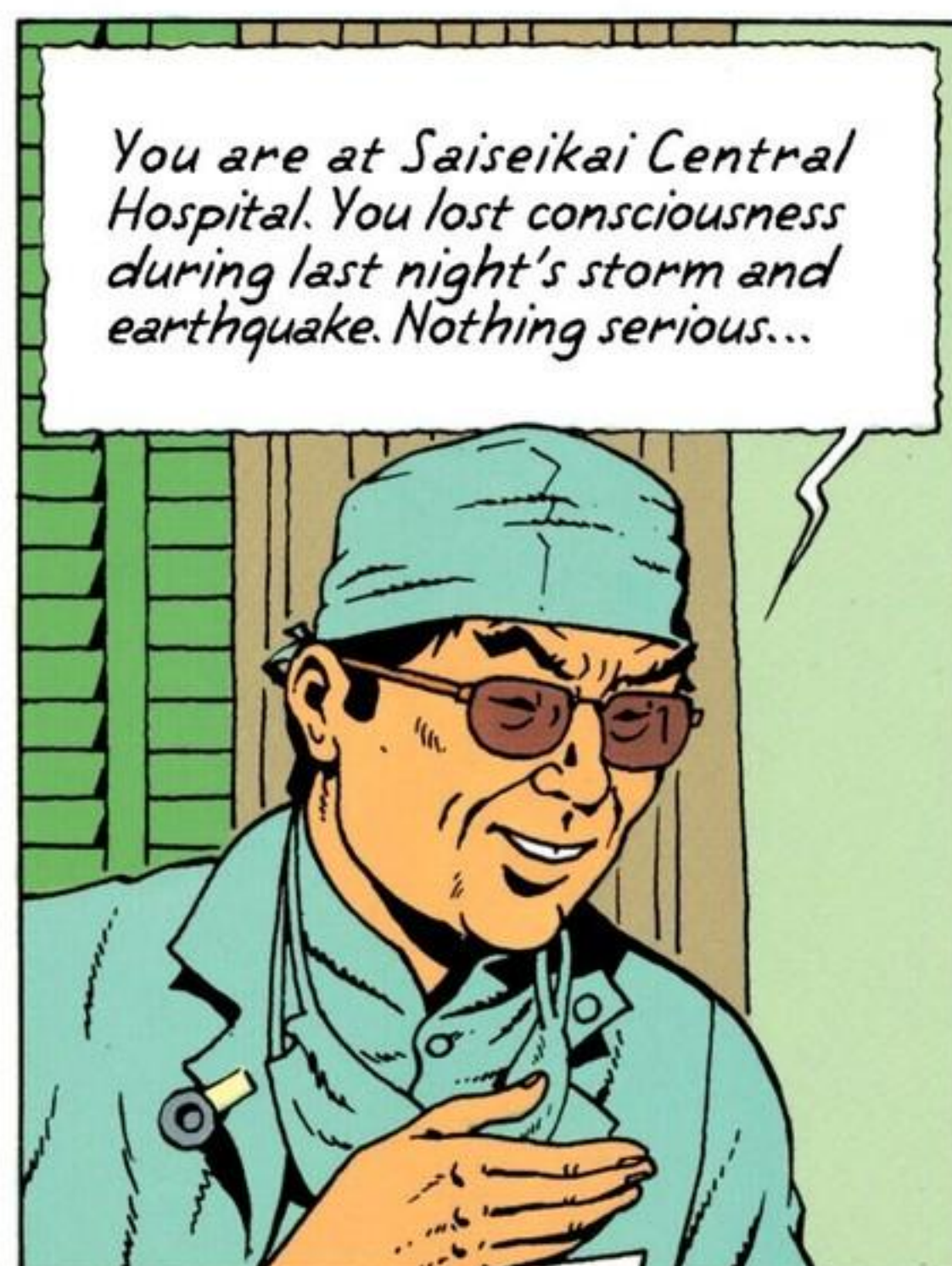
Ôjoshiro!... Ôjoshiro!... Watch out for the robot!... Olrik is behind it all... Satô! For heaven's sake, bring that ryu back!!!!



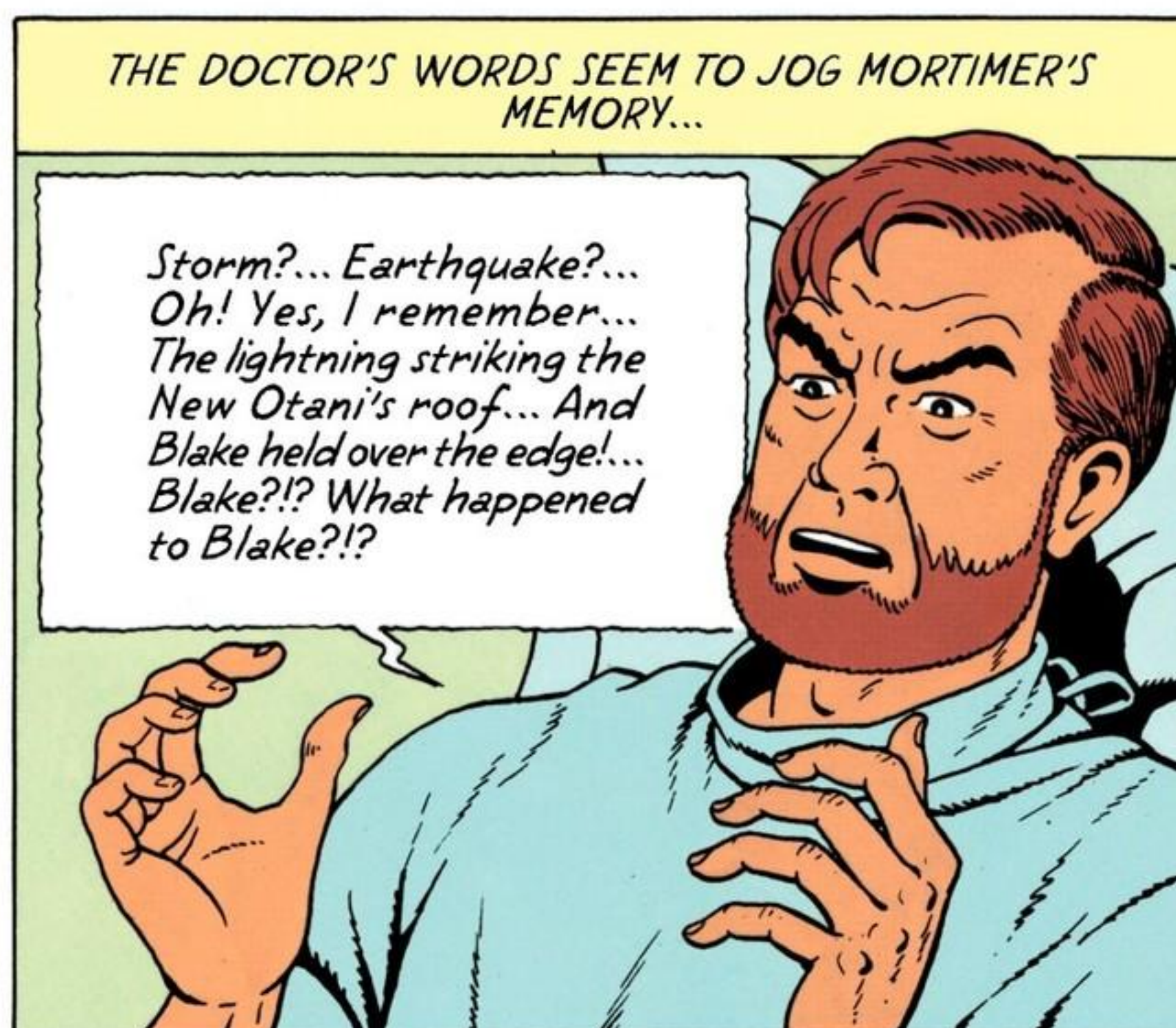
HE CALMS DOWN EVENTUALLY, THOUGH, AND...

Where am I?...





You are at Saiseikai Central Hospital. You lost consciousness during last night's storm and earthquake. Nothing serious...



THE DOCTOR'S WORDS SEEM TO JOG MORTIMER'S MEMORY...

Storm?... Earthquake?... Oh! Yes, I remember... The lightning striking the New Otani's roof... And Blake held over the edge!... Blake?!? What happened to Blake?!?



Don't worry, Professor. Your friend is perfectly well!

Thank the Lord! He managed to escape the killer robot!



Killer robot?!?...

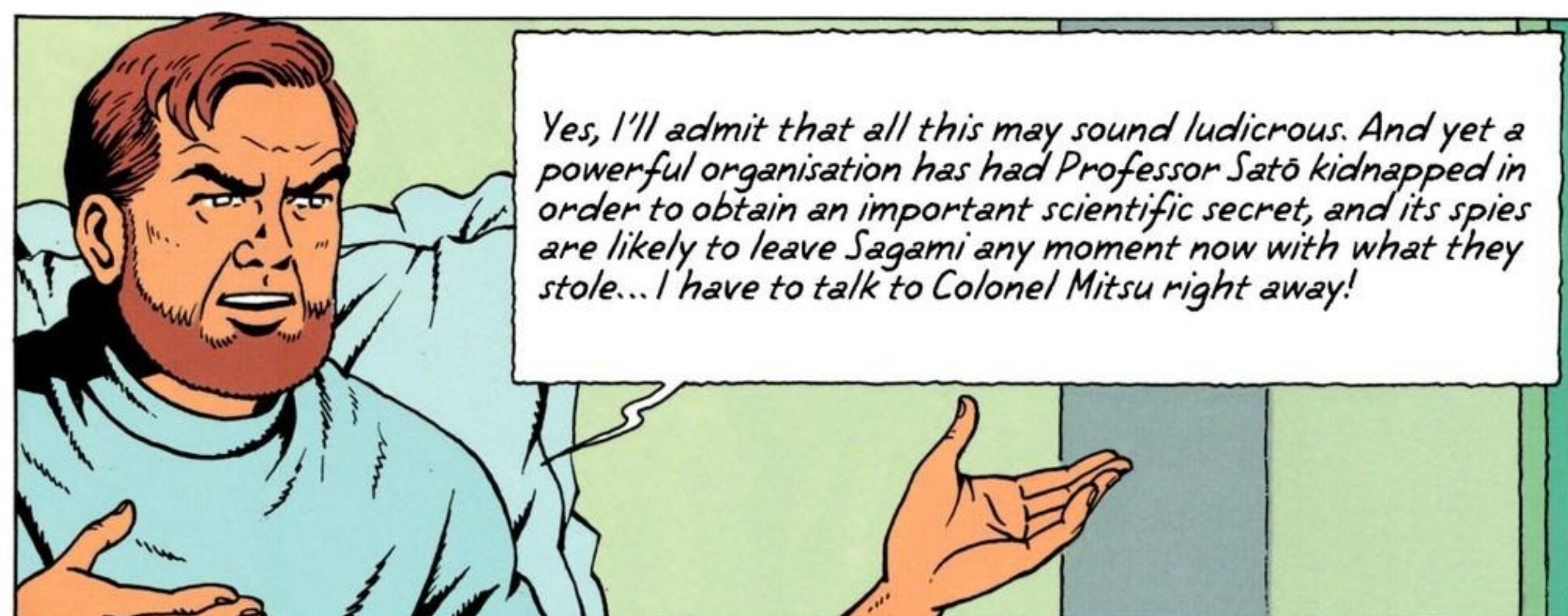
Yes, an android bearing my appearance constructed by Professor Akira Satō's assistant... It was to assassinate Blake on the orders of Colonel Olrik... But I managed to slip away in time...



An android-Mortimer!?... Er... Yes, of course... Why not?...

You think I'm a raving lunatic, don't you?

Why, Professor, I would never...!



Yes, I'll admit that all this may sound ludicrous. And yet a powerful organisation has had Professor Satō kidnapped in order to obtain an important scientific secret, and its spies are likely to leave Sagami any moment now with what they stole... I have to talk to Colonel Mitsu right away!



Of course, of course... Before you go, though, let me give you a little booster... You've suffered quite a shock, and...



SEETHING, MORTIMER IS ABOUT TO SNAP BACK... BUT INSTEAD, HE SAYS CALMLY AFTER TAKING A DEEP BREATH...

Very well, go ahead...

Excellent! You're being reasonable...



HOWEVER...

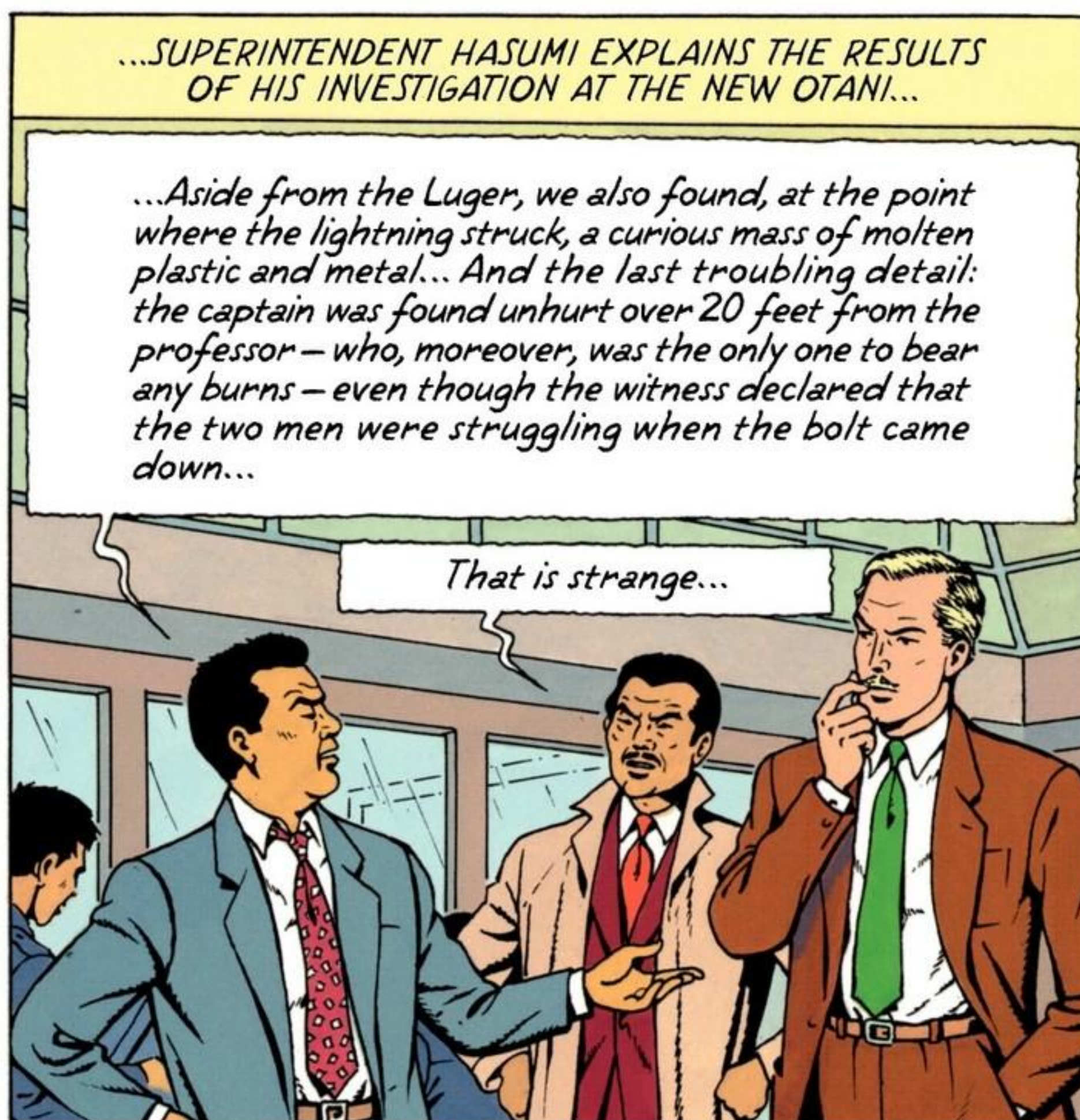
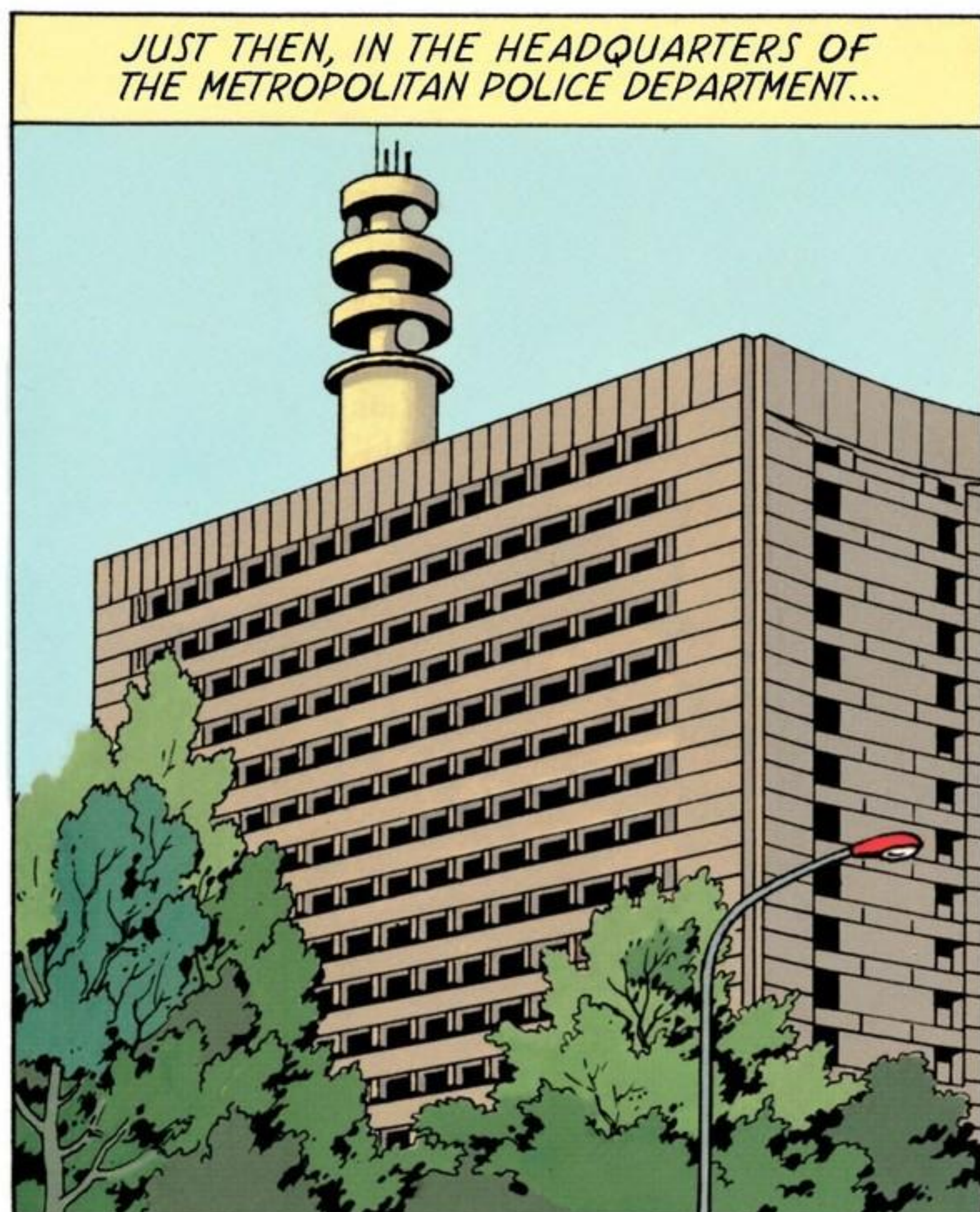
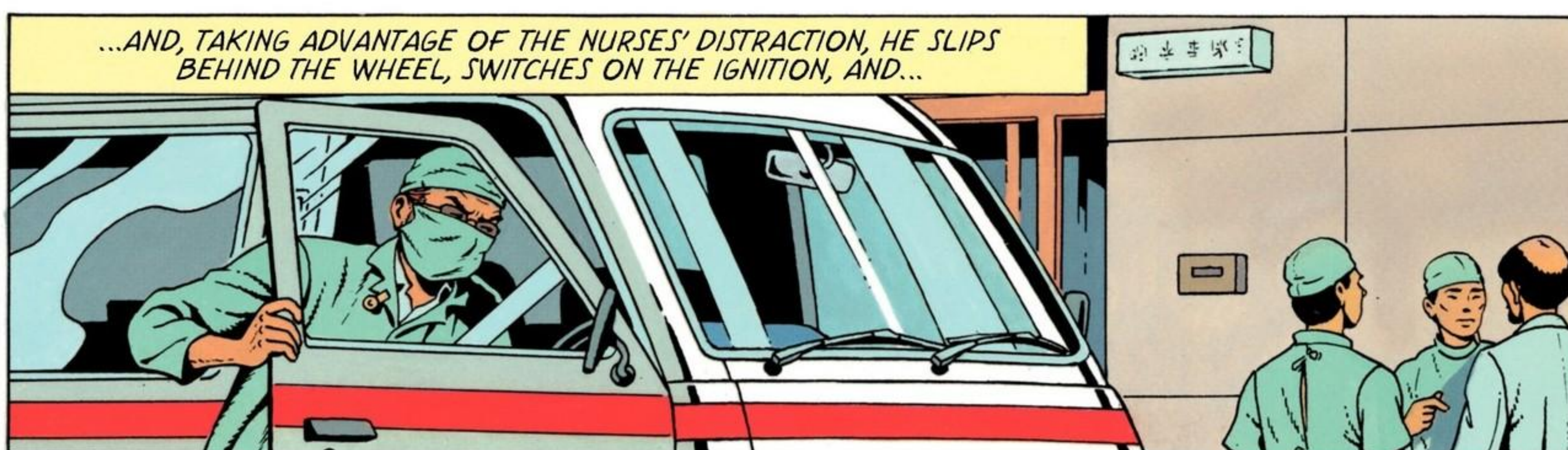
Sorry, doctor!

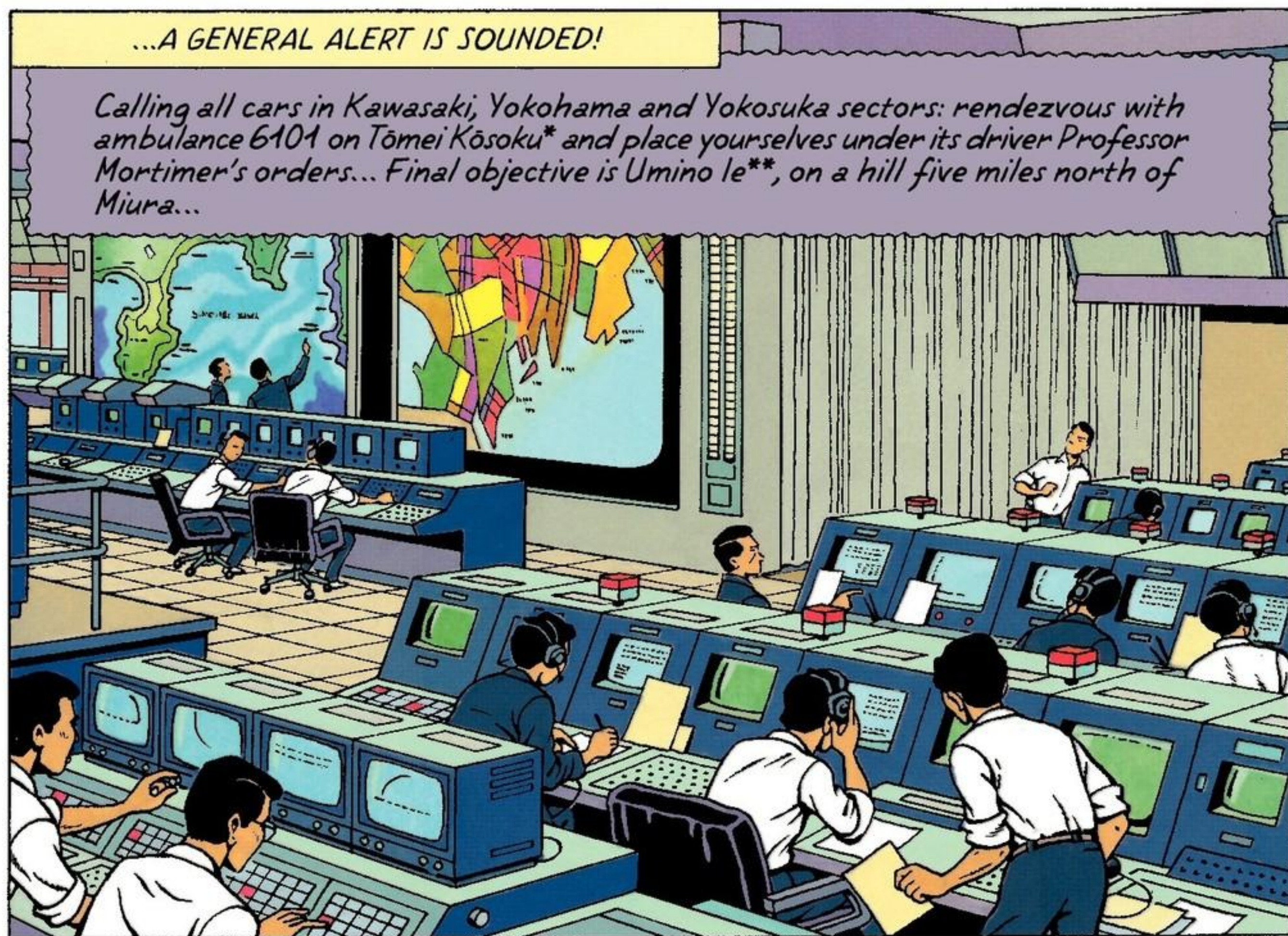
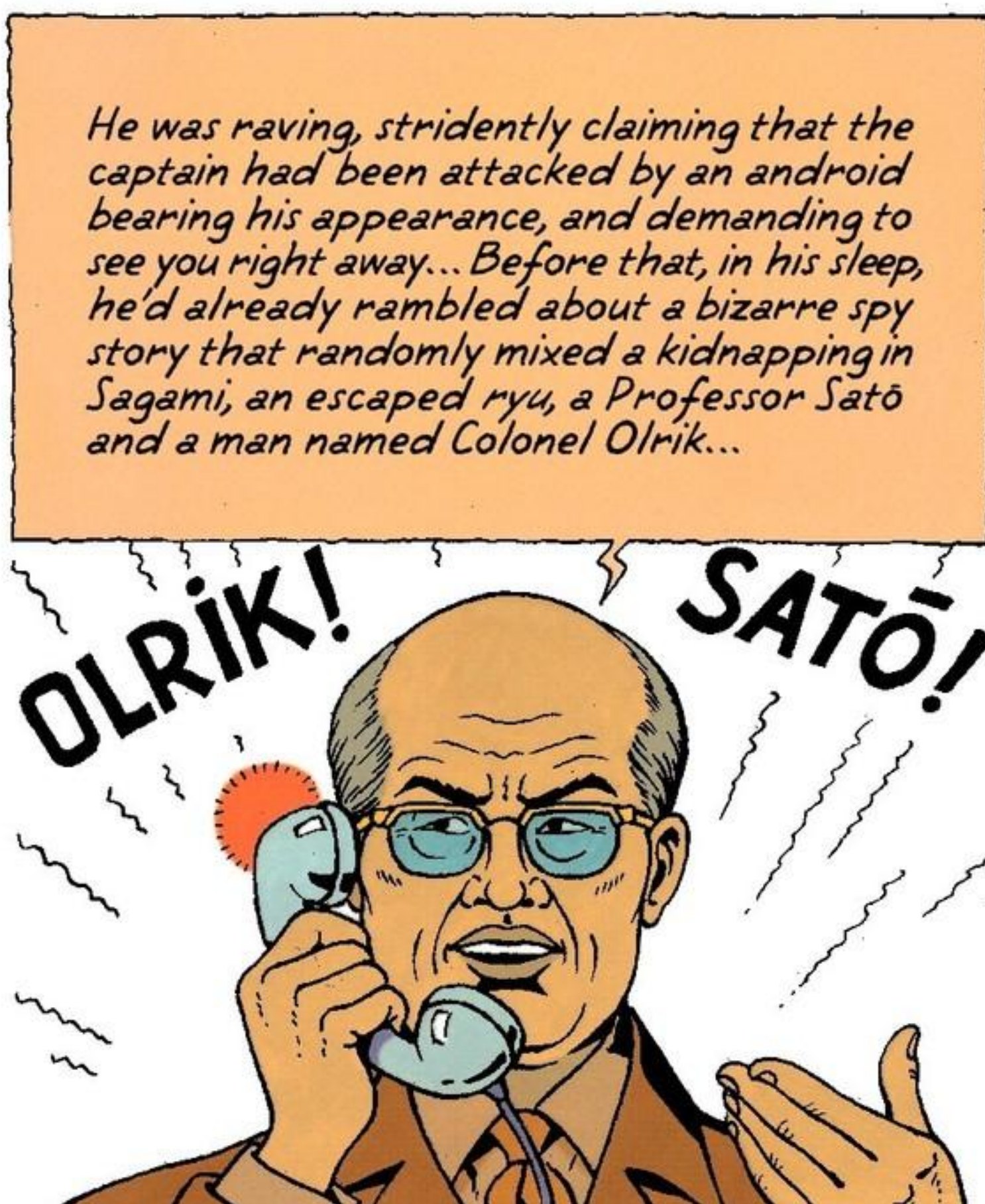
Ow!



...AND, JUST A LITTLE LATER...

Nobody in sight... Time to go!





*MOTORWAY LINKING TOKYO TO THE MIURA PENINSULA
 **THE HOUSE BY THE SEA

MEANWHILE, ABOARD COLONEL MITSU'S HELICOPTER...

...We knew that Satō was working on a new technology. That's why, when I heard his name, I immediately made the connection with that ryu case that's been keeping our services busy for the past eight days!

Mortimer seems to have got quite a lead... No car's been able to catch up to him yet...

True, but we don't have their problems with traffic... and there he is now!

At last!... Can we use the radio to contact him?

Of course... We have the ambulance's frequency.

...AND THE NEXT MINUTE...

Philip! Philip, can you hear me?

Francis?! Where on earth are you calling from?...

From Colonel Mitsu's helicopter... right above you! We know what's going on and a general alert has been declared. So don't take any unnecessary risks... Wait for backup...

I can't! It's a question of minutes, perhaps even seconds... I have to keep going... Bye!

He must have his reasons for acting this way. After him!

All right! Here are our police vehicles! We'll keep the bandits busy until they arrive!...

TIME IS INDEED OF THE ESSENCE. AT UMINO IE, OLRIK AND HIS COMMANDO ARE PREPARING TO SCATTER...

Report, Nobuo.

The men have been paid and are just waiting for the van that will take them back to Tokyo...

Good. Go with them, and make sure everything goes smoothly. You've done excellent work. I'll mention it to our leaders...

It was an honour for me to work under your orders, Colonel. Sayōnara dōmo*!

And on your side of things, Kim?

The motorboat is ready. As for the three formulae, they're safely inside the briefcase...

*GOODBYE



Ah yes, the tamper-proof briefcase that Satō himself created... How ironic! By the way, our good friend appears rather resigned...

I did take the liberty of injecting him with a light mood enhancer, in order to facilitate his passage to the 'Land of the Roots'...

INDEED, KNEELING IN A CORNER, SATŌ APPEARS STRANGELY CALM...
Good old Kim, always the sensitive and compassionate one...



OLRIK HAS WALKED UP TO MORTIMER I AND STANDS BEFORE IT...

Well done, Professor! You were perfect as the gentleman-burglar... I'll miss you very much.

*NE-NO-KUNI, ALSO KNOWN AS YOMI – THE UNDERWORLD, THE KINGDOM OF THE DEAD.



As for me, I've fulfilled my contract. Our successful operation this morning at the Sumitomo Bank concludes our mission. Everything went according to plan... Even Sharkey's stupidity turned out to be useful, since it rid me of both my enemies at the same time... Speaking of that imbecile – where is he?

He's placing the last of the explosives. See for yourself, Colonel...



KIM TOUCHES A BUTTON AND THE GANGSTER APPEARS, HARD AT WORK AMONG THE NIGHTMARISH HORDE OF UNMOVING, UNFINISHED ROBOTS HE CAUSED TO BE MANUFACTURED BY MISTAKE...

Well, are you coming? Or would you rather be atomised with your creations?

Coming, boss!



Once we're far enough from the shore, I'll use this micro-emitter and blow everything up. That way, there'll be no traces left of either invention or inventor... and no risk of competition!

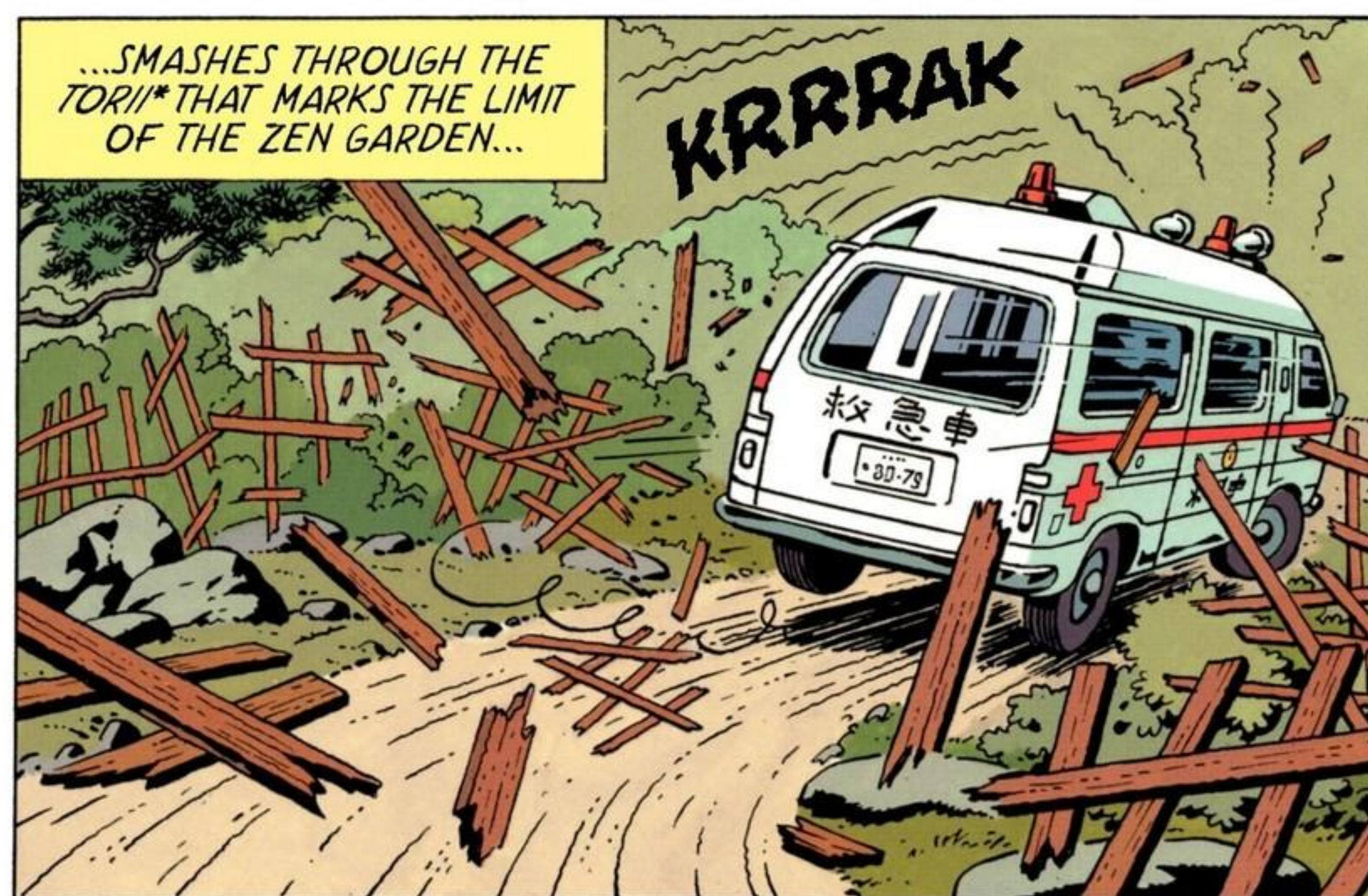
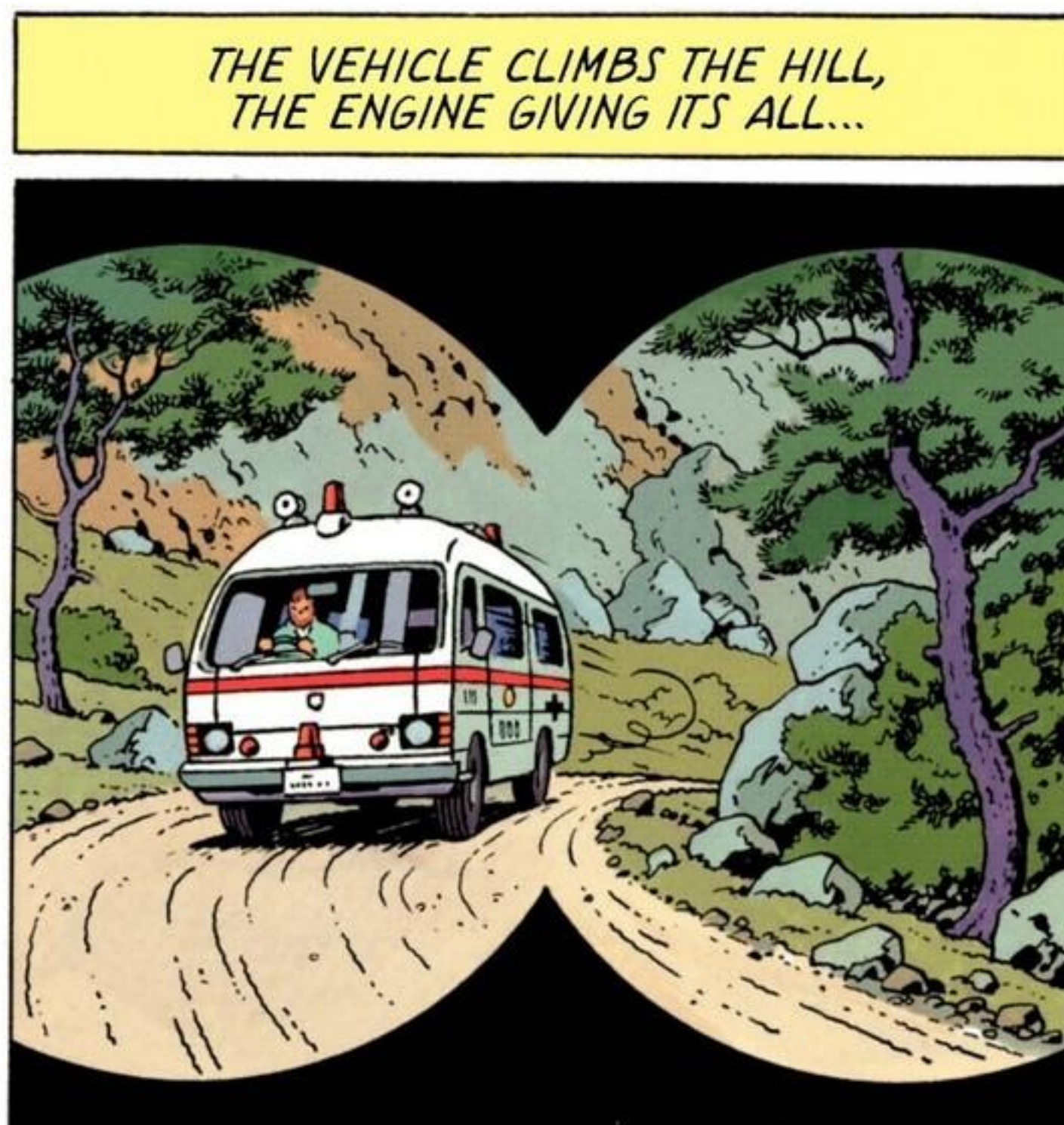


AT THE ESTATE'S ENTRANCE, HOWEVER, THE MEN ARE GETTING IMPATIENT...

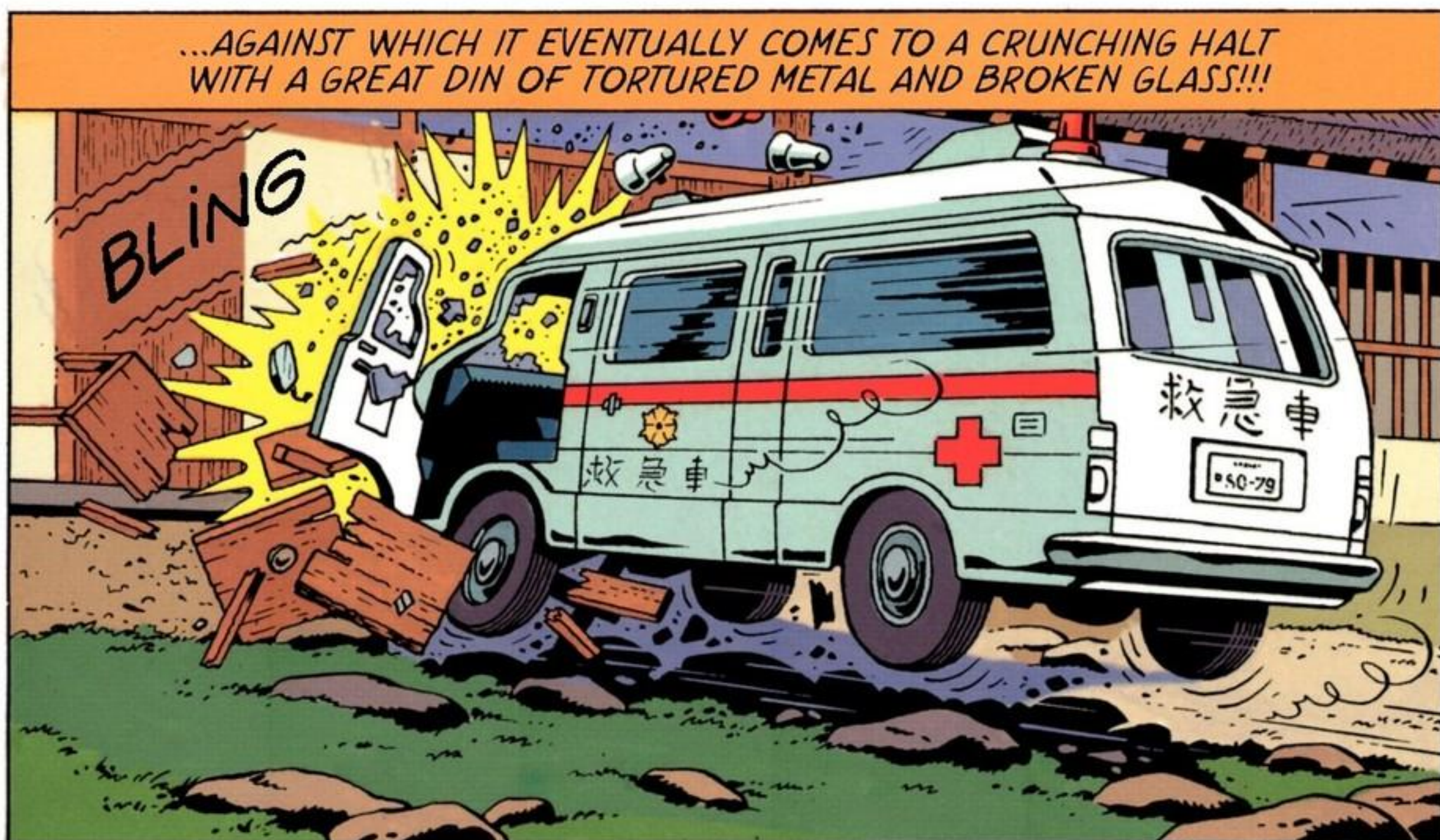
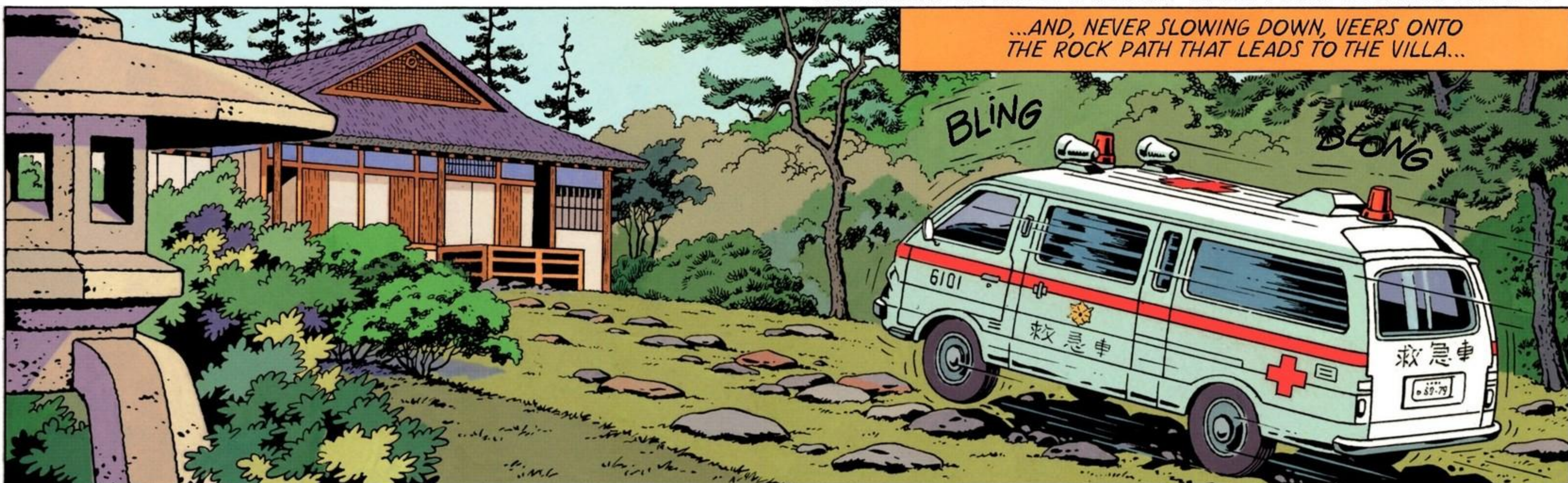
Where the devil is that van, anyway?

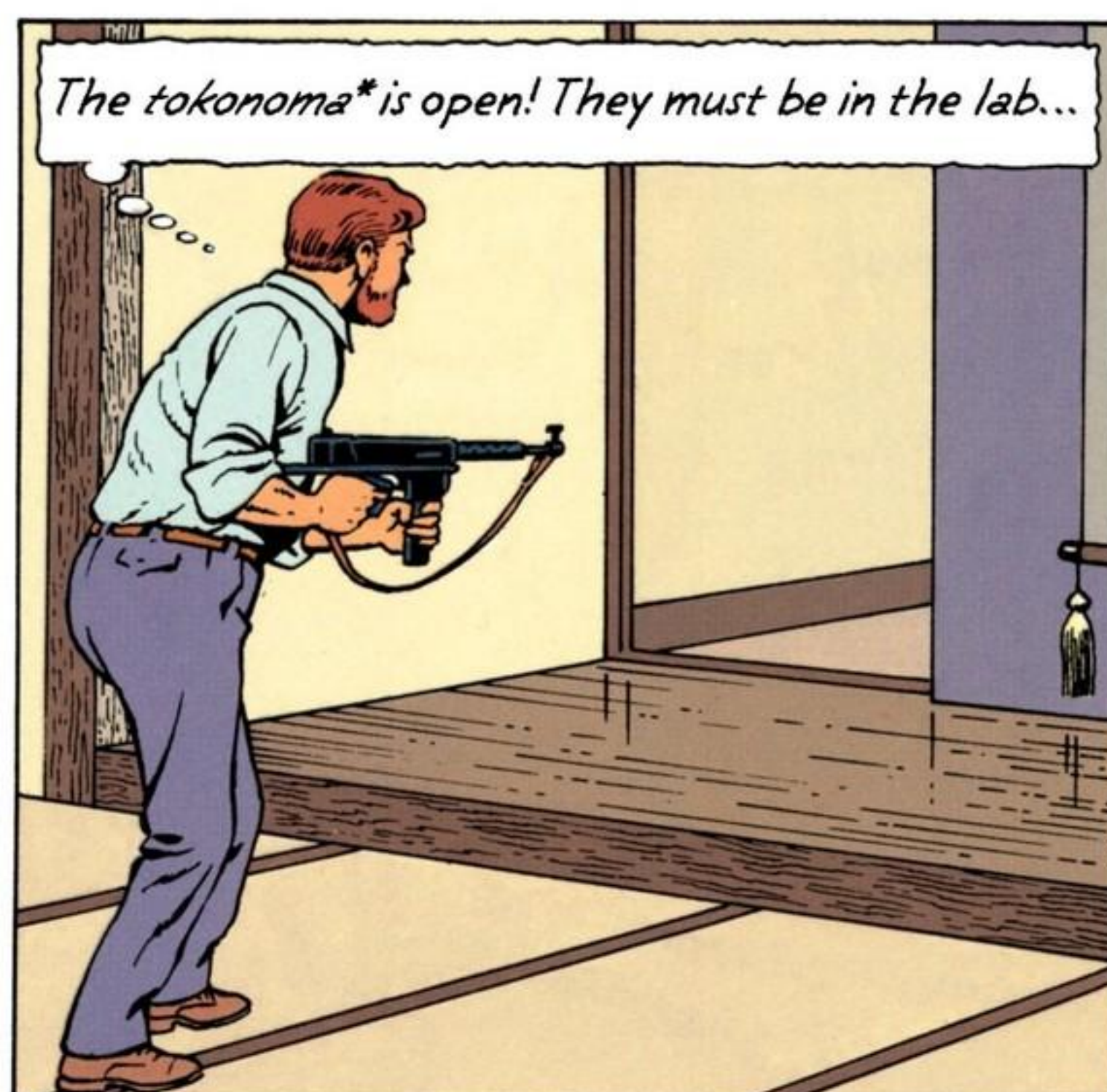
Har! Can't wait to be gone!

Stop grumbling – there's your van now!



*TRADITIONAL JAPANESE GATE MOST OFTEN FOUND IN SHINTO TEMPLES.





*AN ALCOVE IN A RECEPTION ROOM RESERVED FOR THE DISPLAY OF HONOURD ART PIECES.



LIKE A SWARM OF NIGHTMARISH INSECTS, THE ANDROIDS DESCEND UPON THE STAGGERED MEN!...
HIDEOUS, TERRIFYING, INVULNERABLE, THEY SPREAD INSTANT PANIC THROUGH BOTH SIDES!...



MITSU'S HELICOPTER, WHICH HAD BEEN ABOUT TO LAND, BARELY MANAGES TO EVADE THEM!...



Oyamaa*! What devilry is this!?!

A very effective trick – look at the path behind the villa!

*GOOD GRIEF!

ABOUT 50 YARDS BELOW THEM, THREE MEN ARE RUNNING TOWARDS THE SHORE...



...There, in that small cove – there's a motorboat!



Let's cut off their retreat!... I'm heading down!

GETTING AHEAD OF THE FLEEING TRIO, THE HELICOPTER HOVERS ABOVE THE BOAT, ALLOWING BLAKE TO JUMP OUT!...



Unmoor it! The wind from the rotors will push it away from the shore...

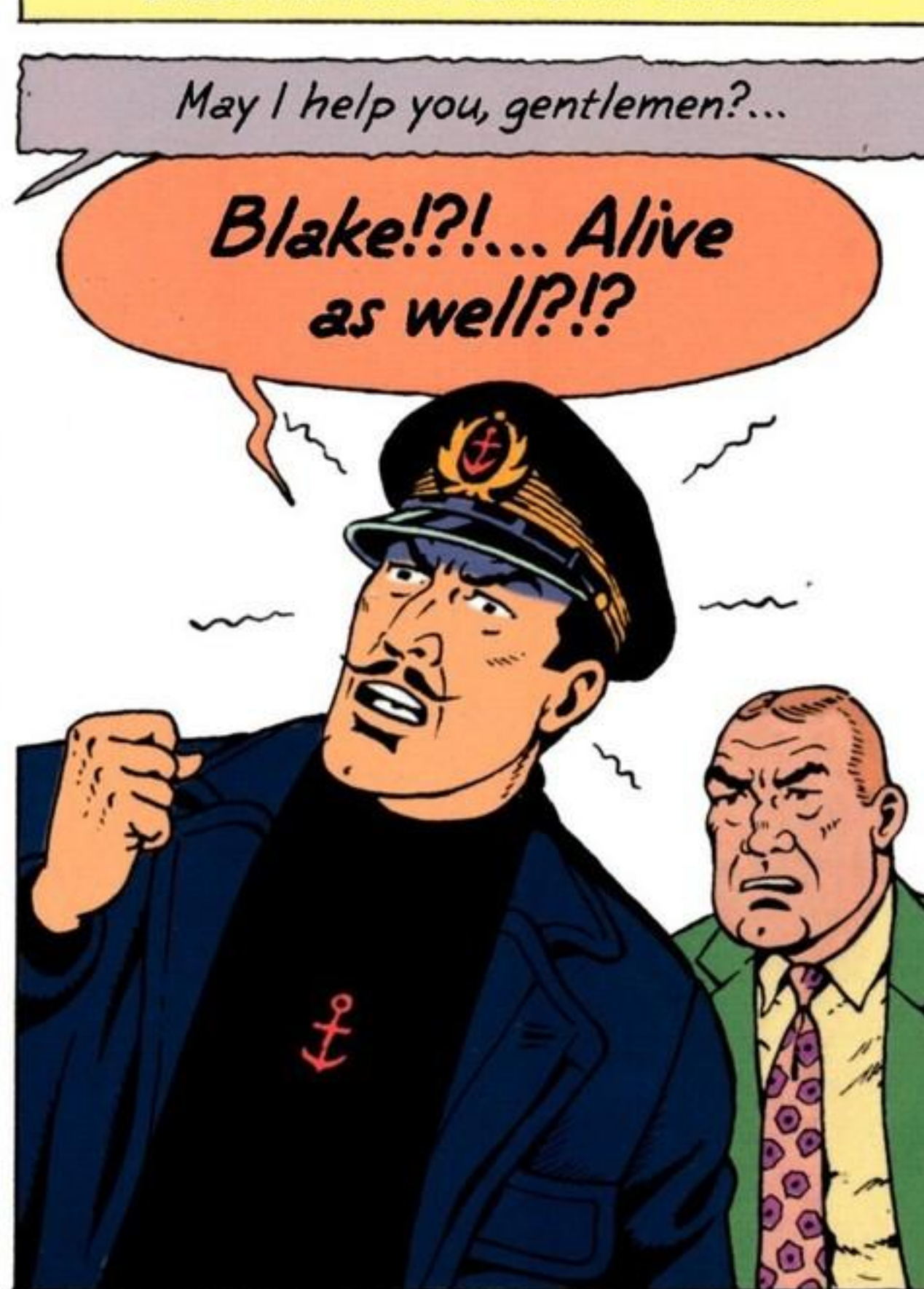
All right! I'll take care of the rest!

AND WHEN OLRİK AND HIS HENCHMEN REACH THE DOCK...



Confound it!

THEN A VOICE, ONLY TOO FAMILIAR, GIVES HIM AN ALMIGHTY START...



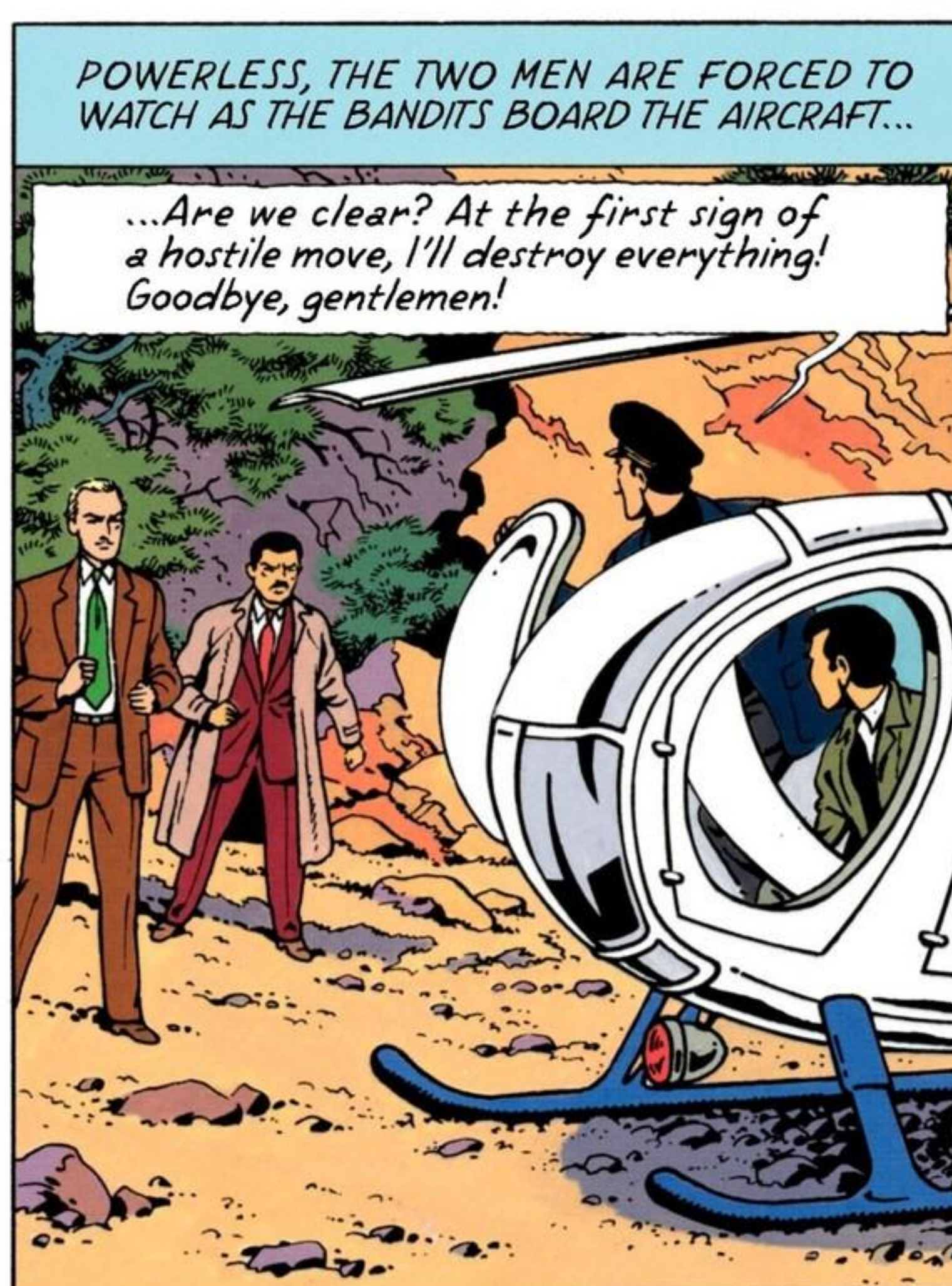
May I help you, gentlemen?...

Blake!?!... Alive as well?!?

AND WHILE THE CAPTAIN REARS UP, GUN IN HAND, MITSU TAKES POSITION BEHIND THE FUGITIVES...



I'm terribly sorry, Colonel, but this is where your little trip ends... Hands in the air, please!



MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE SMOKE-FILLED COMMAND POST, SATŌ, JOLTED BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS BY THE EXPLOSION, IS STRUGGLING TO GET TO HIS FEET...

I ... must ... stand up!

HE FINALLY LURCHES UPRIGHT, AND WHAT HE SEES CLEARS THE LAST COBWEBS OUT OF HIS HEAD!... MORTIMER, HIS CHEST CRUSHED BY THE ANDROID'S ARMS, IS GASPING FOR AIR!...

Namusanbou*!

IMMEDIATELY, SATŌ GIVES THE SHUTDOWN ORDER...

Ōjōshiro!

...AND MORTIMER IS RELEASED...

My poor friend!

Goodness! That... That was ... close...

Mortimer! We must leave at once – this place is rigged to explode! I couldn't move, but I managed to overhear those scoundrels discussing their plans!... The lift is blocked and the tube destroyed, but...

...but what?

ALREADY SATŌ HAS DASHED TO THE CONSOLE...

Luckily, the radio circuit is intact ... and one of the infrared cameras is still functional, see!

Heavens!

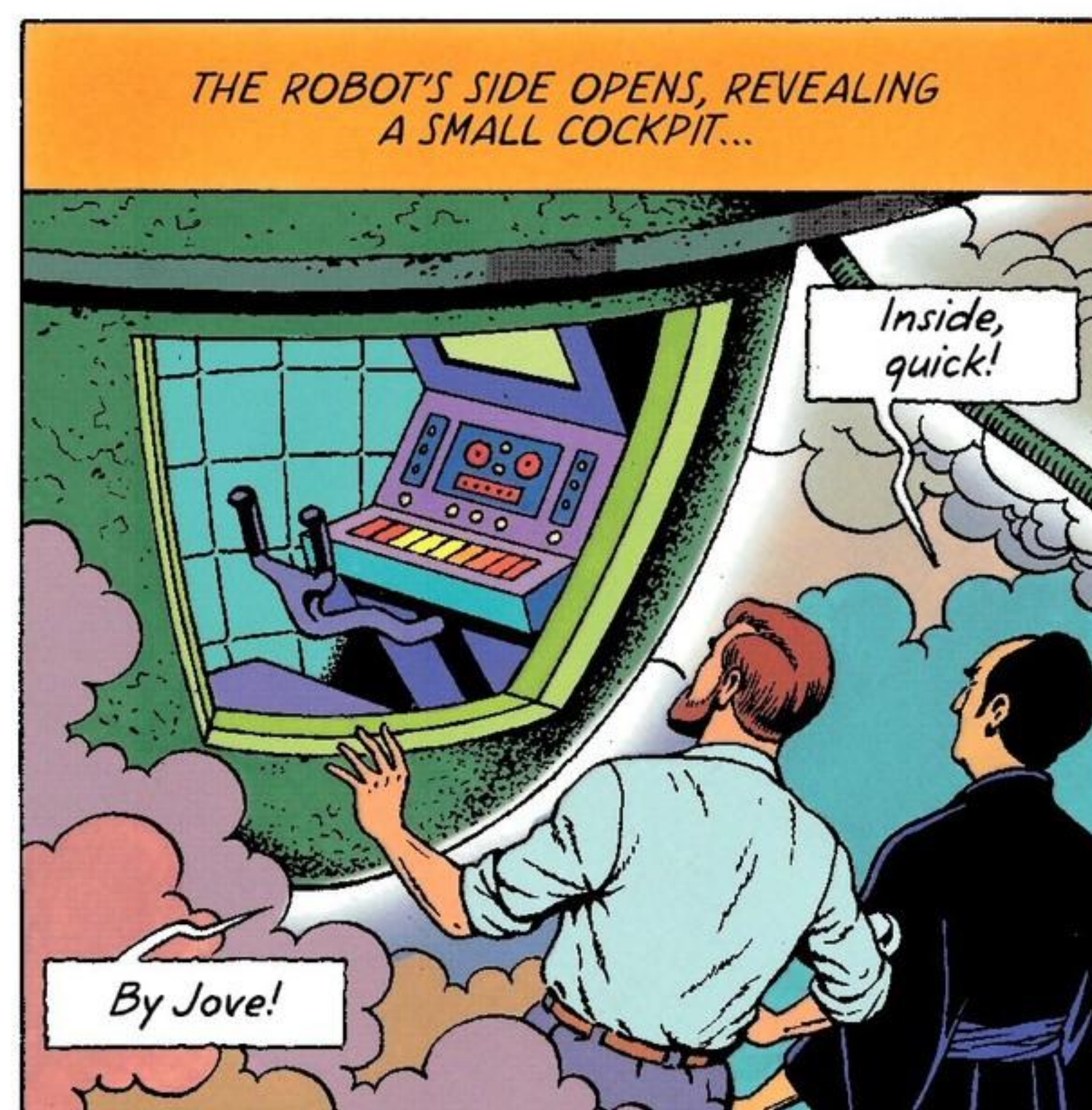
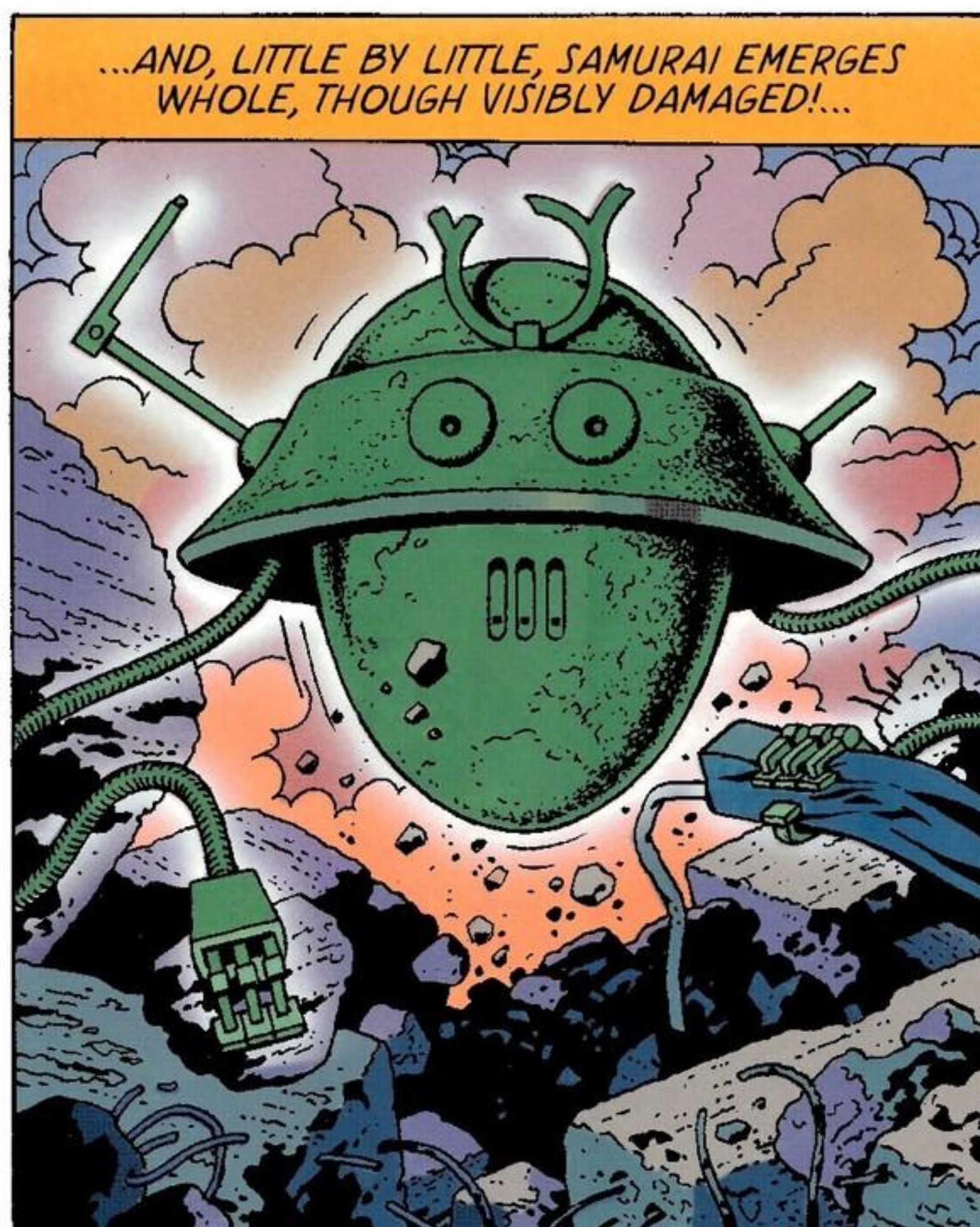
ON THE SCREEN, AN IMAGE OF THE LAUNCH TUBE HAS APPEARED, MANGLED AND COVERED IN SMOKE...

Only one hope left to us: Samurai!

It must be in pieces!...

We'll see... Kotchie koi, Samurai*!

*COME, SAMURAI!



*FROM NOW ON, YOU WILL OBEY ONLY ME!

AS FOR BLAKE AND MITSU, WHO HAVE FINALLY ARRIVED AT THE HOUSE, THEY STOP DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS, AGHAST!...

There's no chance of getting through!

Are they even still alive?

OUT AT SEA, THE PASSENGERS OF THE HELICOPTER HAVE JUST SPOTTED THE WAKE OF A PERISCOPE...

There!!!

We no longer need hostages, then! Goodbye, Professors! Say hello to Lucifer for me!!!

WITH A PUSH OF OLRİK'S FINGER, A LOW RUMBLE RISES FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH, SHAKING THE ENTIRE PROMONTORY AND CRACKING THE GROUND, AS THE VILLA IS INSTANTLY ENGULFED IN FLAMES...

BRRAAOOM

It's over!!!

Chikuso*!!!

BUT SUDDENLY, FROM THE NEWLY FORMED INCANDESCENT CRATER RISES, LIKE HO-MUSUBI** HIMSELF, THE CORRODED, MUTILATED BUT STILL FORMIDABLE MASS...

...OF THE INVINCIBLE SAMURAI...

THEN, LOUDER THAN THE TUMULT, AN ENORMOUS, GODLIKE VOICE COMES OUT OF THE FLOATING GIANT...

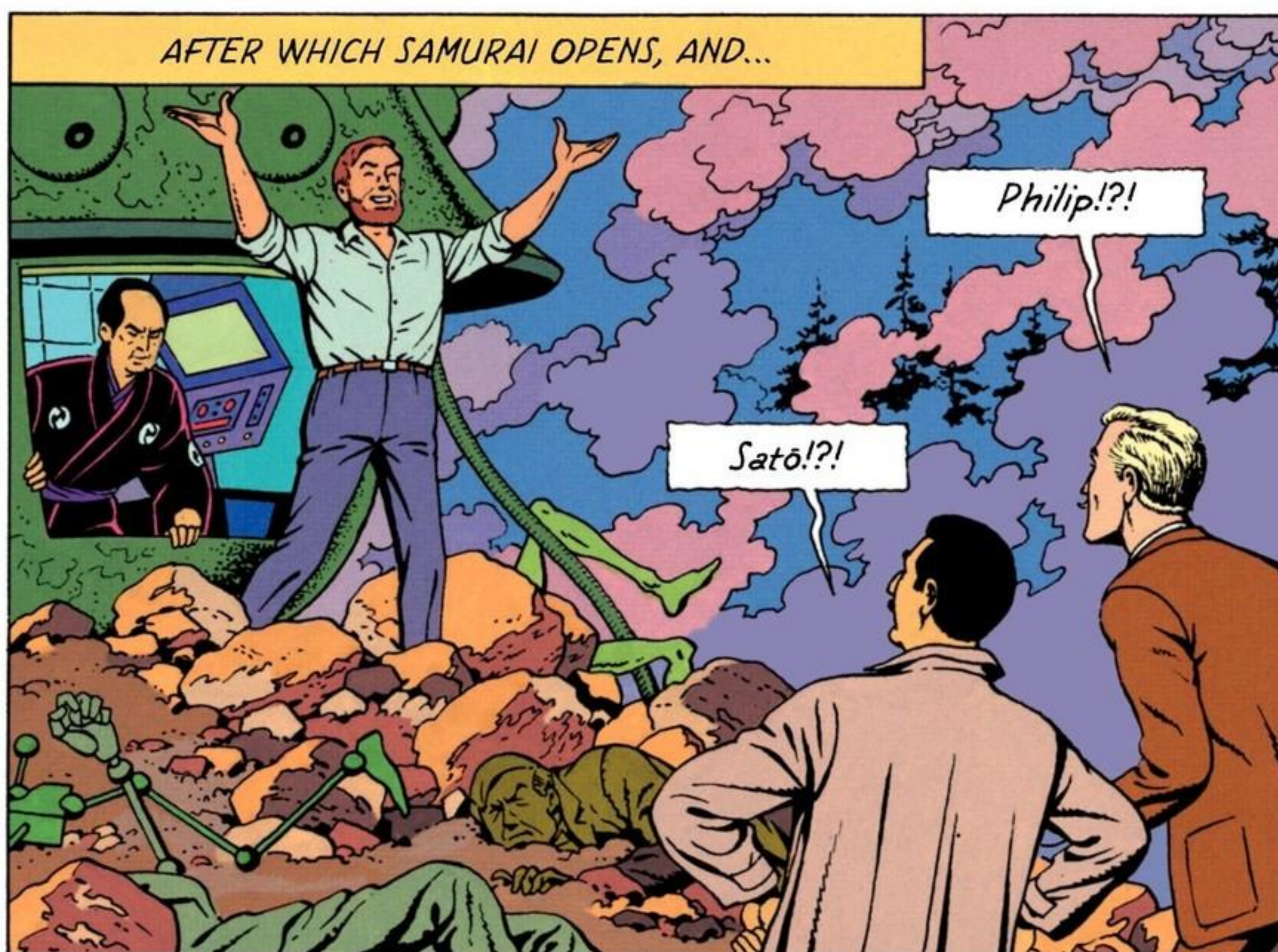
WOSHİRO

*AN ANGRY EXCLAMATION, STRONGER THAN 'KUSO'.
 **GOD OF FIRE IN THE SHINTO RELIGION.

WITH THOSE MAGICAL WORDS, THE ELECTRONIC MONSTERS, INSTANTANEOUSLY PARALYSED, CRUMBLE AND PLUMMET TO THE GROUND LIKE SO MANY PUPPETS WITH THEIR WIRES CUT!!!



AFTER WHICH SAMURAI OPENS, AND...



Philip!?!?

Satō!?!?



Hello, old chap!!!

Playing the alien visitor, are we?!?

Konichiwa, o-genki desu ka, sensei?*

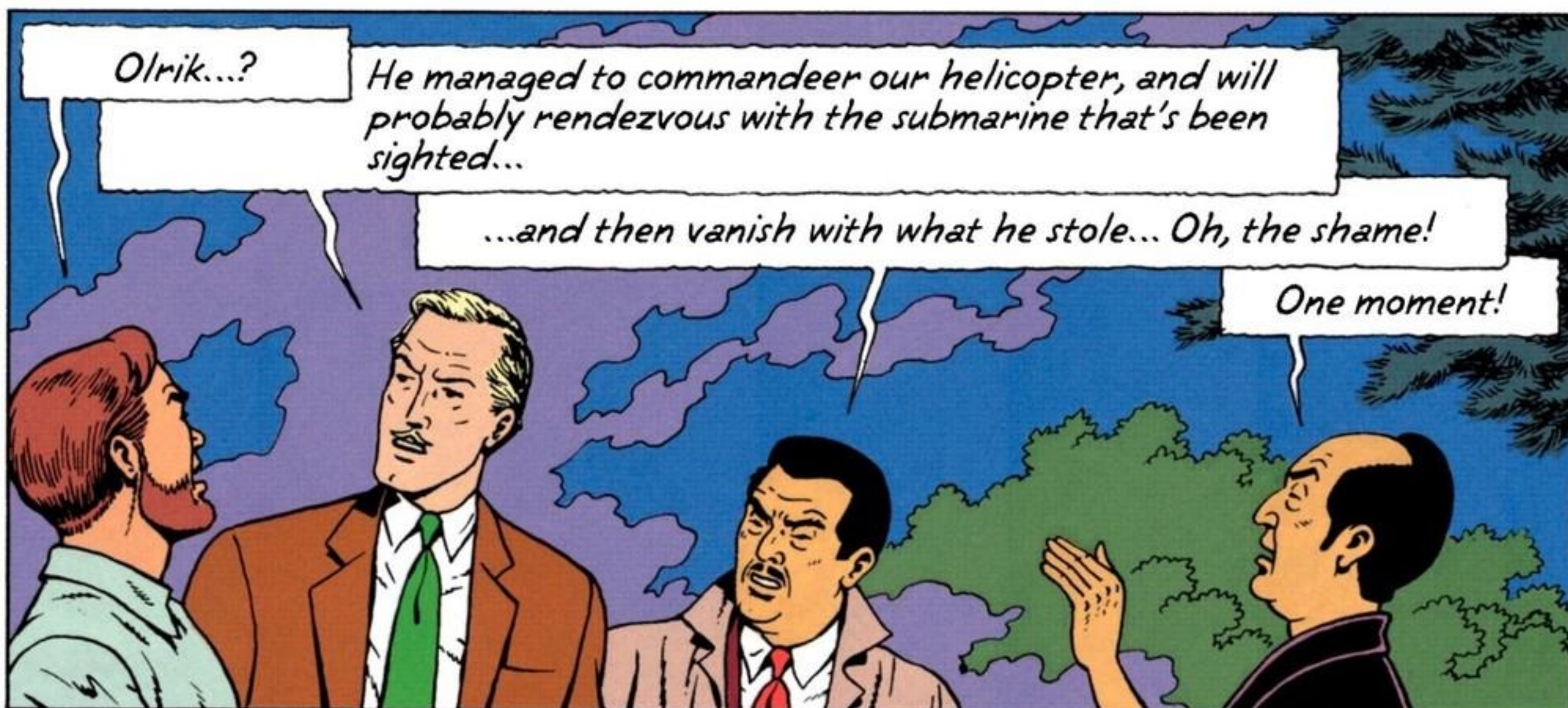
Genki desu. Taisha wa dō desu ka?***

Olrik...?

He managed to commandeer our helicopter, and will probably rendezvous with the submarine that's been sighted...

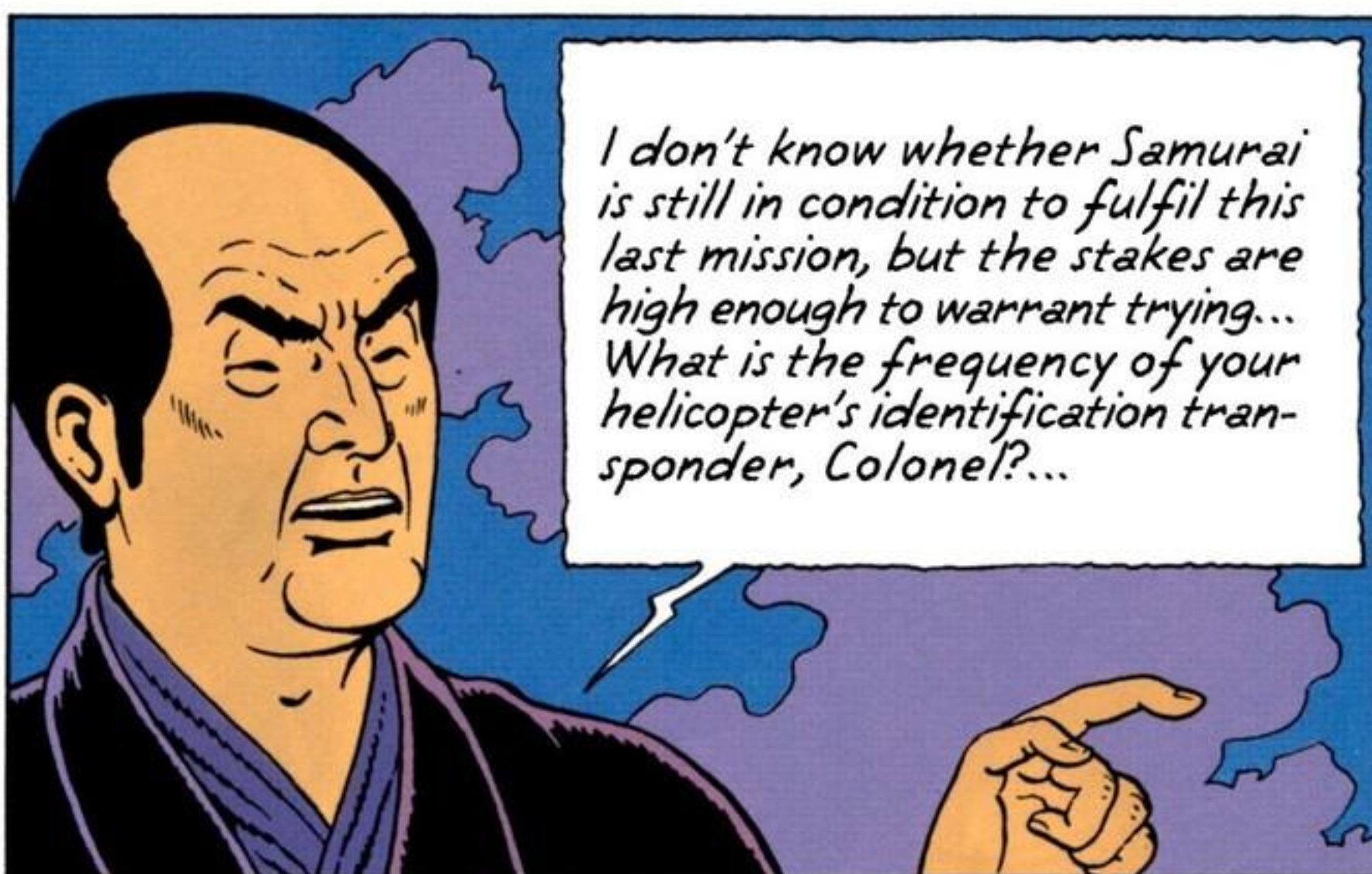
...and then vanish with what he stole... Oh, the shame!

One moment!



SATŌ TURNS TO SAMURAI AND SAYS...

Yokukike dazo: 220 MHz.
Tsukamaete, tatakikowase!
Kōdō kaishi!!****



I don't know whether Samurai is still in condition to fulfil this last mission, but the stakes are high enough to warrant trying... What is the frequency of your helicopter's identification transponder, Colonel?...



It transmits on 220 MHz.



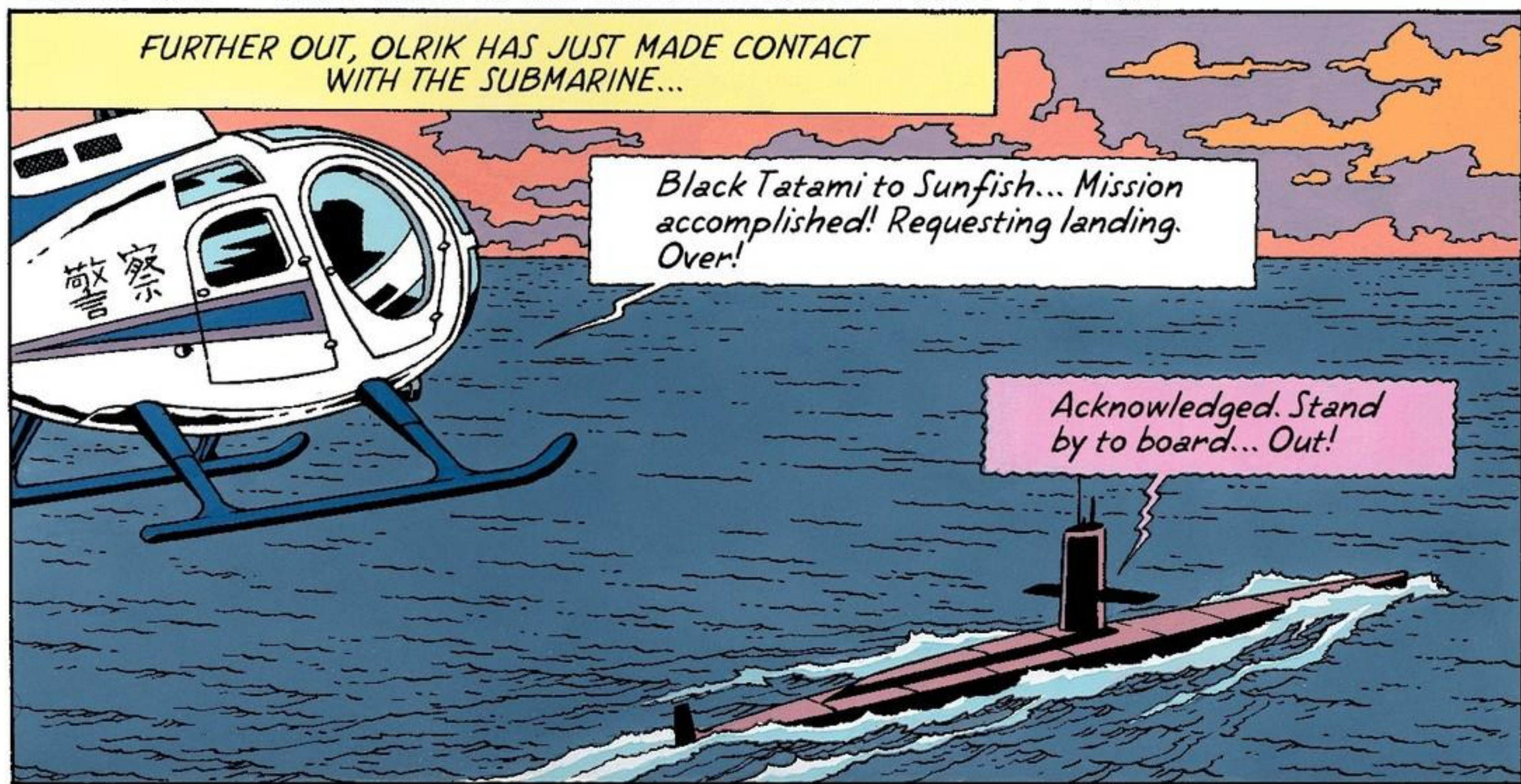
*HELLO. HOW ARE YOU, PROFESSOR? **I'M FINE. HOW ARE YOU, COLONEL? ***LISTEN CAREFULLY: 220 MHZ. CATCH IT AND DESTROY IT! GO!



ALTHOUGH MORTALLY WOUNDED, THE MACHINE OBEYS THE ORDER. IT BEGINS TO SHAKE VIOLENTLY, TURNS RED, THEN WITH A HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE, LEAPS INTO THE AIR AND BARRELS TOWARDS THE OCEAN...

Farewell, loyal servant. You must be a true kamikaze*, now!

*'DIVINE WIND' - NAME GIVEN TO THE JAPANESE SUICIDE-PILOTS OF WW2.



FURTHER OUT, OLRİK HAS JUST MADE CONTACT WITH THE SUBMARINE...

Black Tatami to Sunfish... Mission accomplished! Requesting landing. Over!

Acknowledged. Stand by to board... Out!



BUT KIM CRIES OUT IN FEAR!...

Samurai! It's after us!!!

What?!

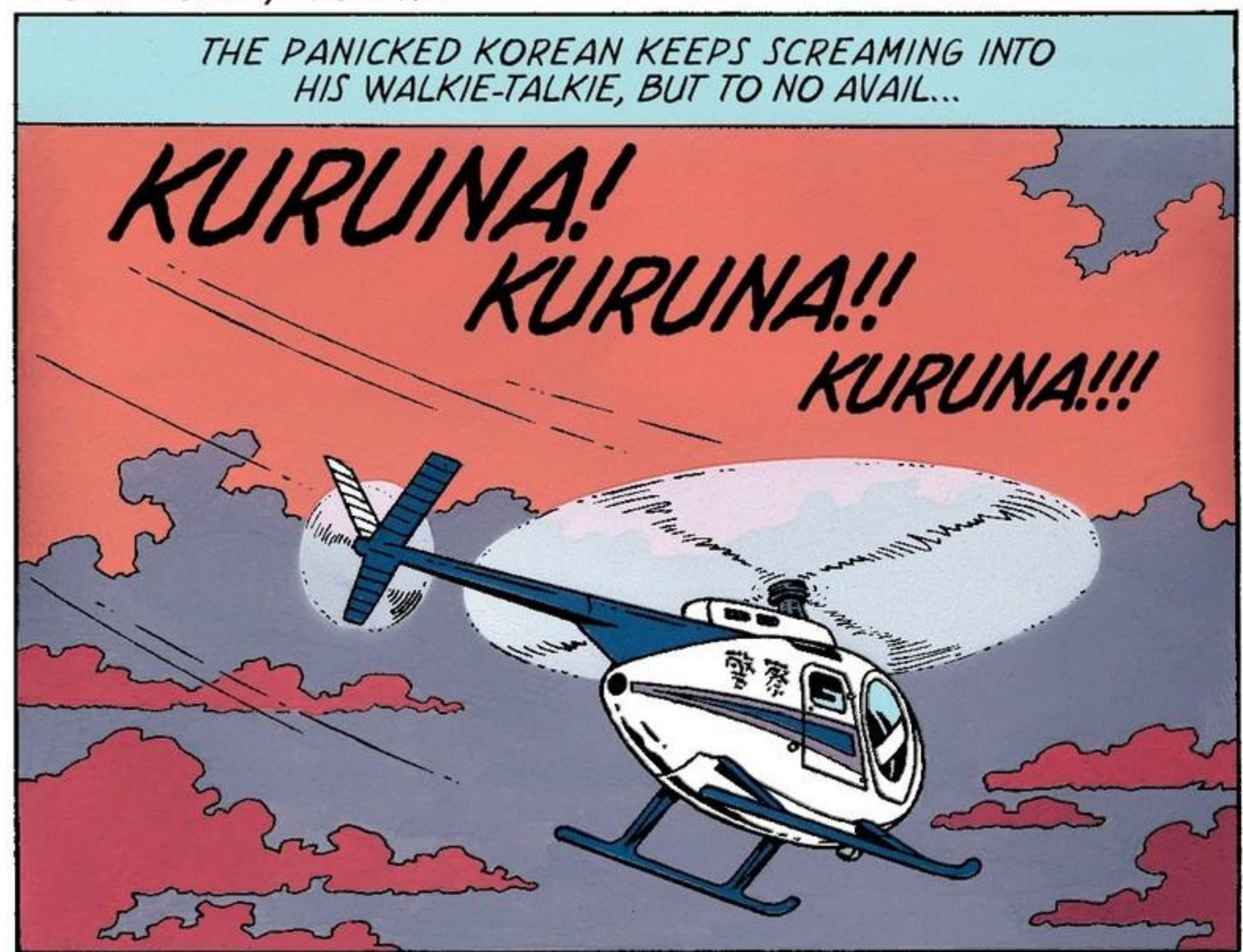


The devil! Stop it!

Kuruna*!

INDEED. SURROUNDED BY A FIERY HALO, THE ROBOT IS STREAKING TOWARDS THEM...

*DON'T COME / GO AWAY!



THE PANICKED KOREAN KEEPS SCREAMING INTO HIS WALKIE-TALKIE, BUT TO NO AVAIL...

KURUNA!
KURUNA!!
KURUNA!!!



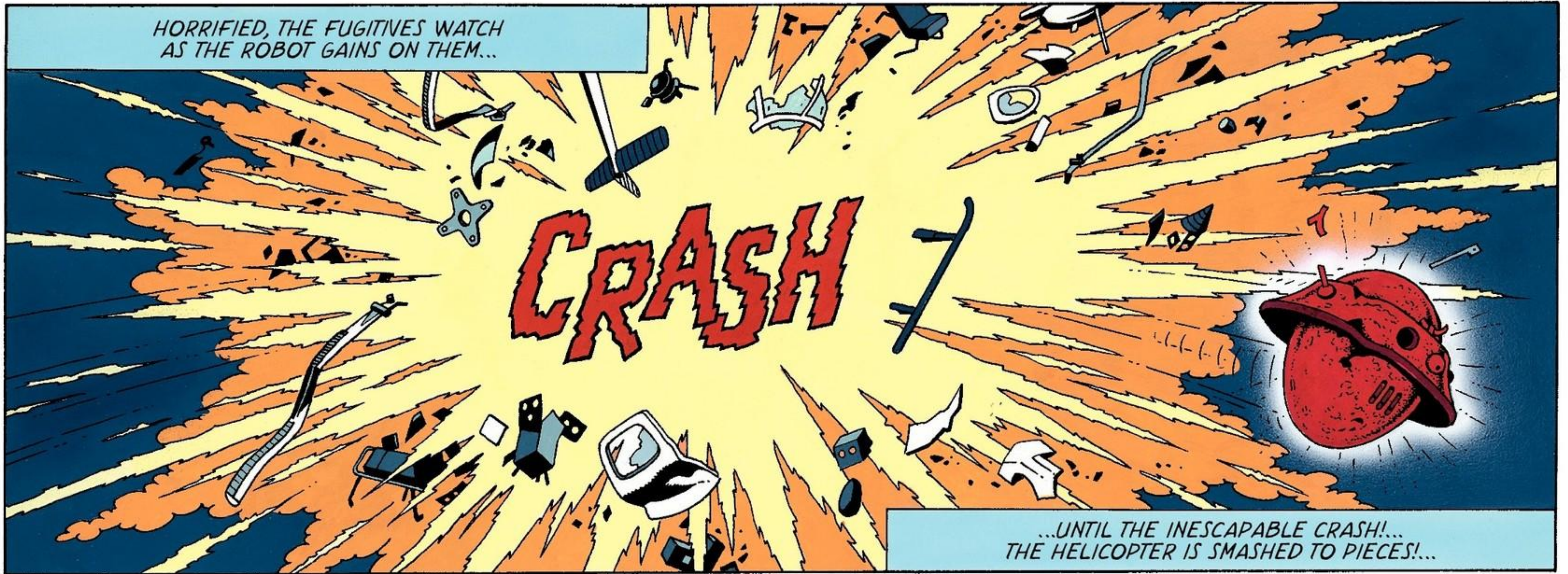
...AS NOTHING CAN POSSIBLY DIVERT THE RELENTLESS HUNTER FROM ITS TARGET NOW...

It won't obey!... The code's been changed!!!

We're done for!

Curse it!!!

HORRIFIED, THE FUGITIVES WATCH
AS THE ROBOT GAINS ON THEM...



...UNTIL THE INESCAPABLE CRASH!...
THE HELICOPTER IS SMASHED TO PIECES!...

...WHILE THE ELECTRONIC AVENGER, OUT OF CONTROL,
PLOUGHS INTO THE PIRATE SUBMARINE!!!!



FROM THE TOP OF THE BLASTED PROMONTORY, EVERYONE HAS
WITNESSED THE NAIL-BITING, DISTANT EPILOGUE TO THE ENTIRE
TRAGEDY. EVENTUALLY, MORTIMER BREAKS THE SILENCE...



...AND, TURNING TO SATŌ...

Of course, my dear colleague, I presume you
will be able to recreate your formulae?...
Actually, what if the briefcase wasn't
destroyed? What would happen if your
invention fell into the wrong hands?

As for that possibility,
do not worry!...



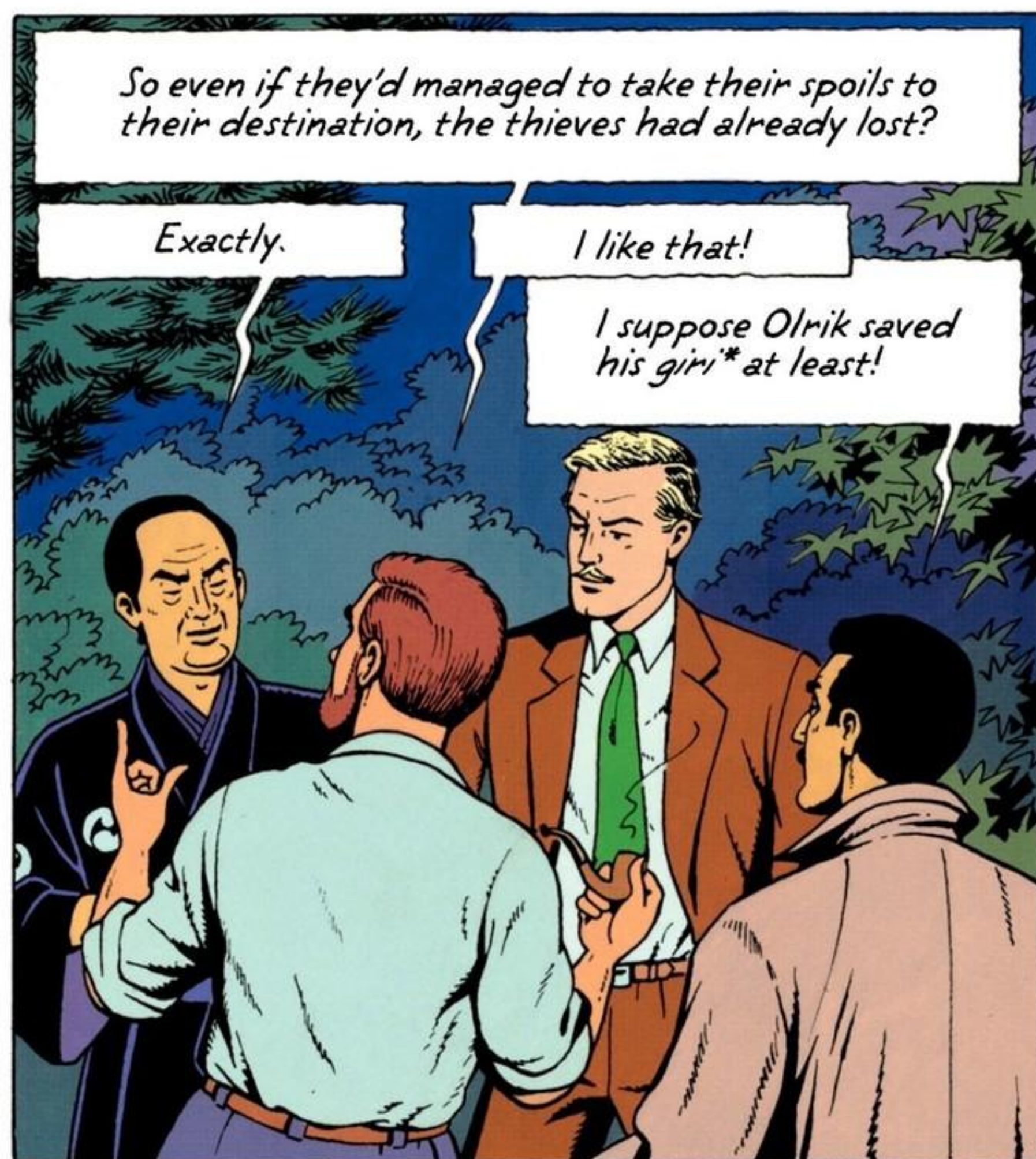
FACING HIS SURPRISED COMPANIONS, SATŌ CONTINUES...

As Professor Mortimer already knows, those bandits had neutralised me using a drug
that did not, however, render me unconscious. That is how I was able to overhear Kim
suggest to Olrik that they should put the formulae in a special briefcase I'd designed
specifically for transporting important documents...

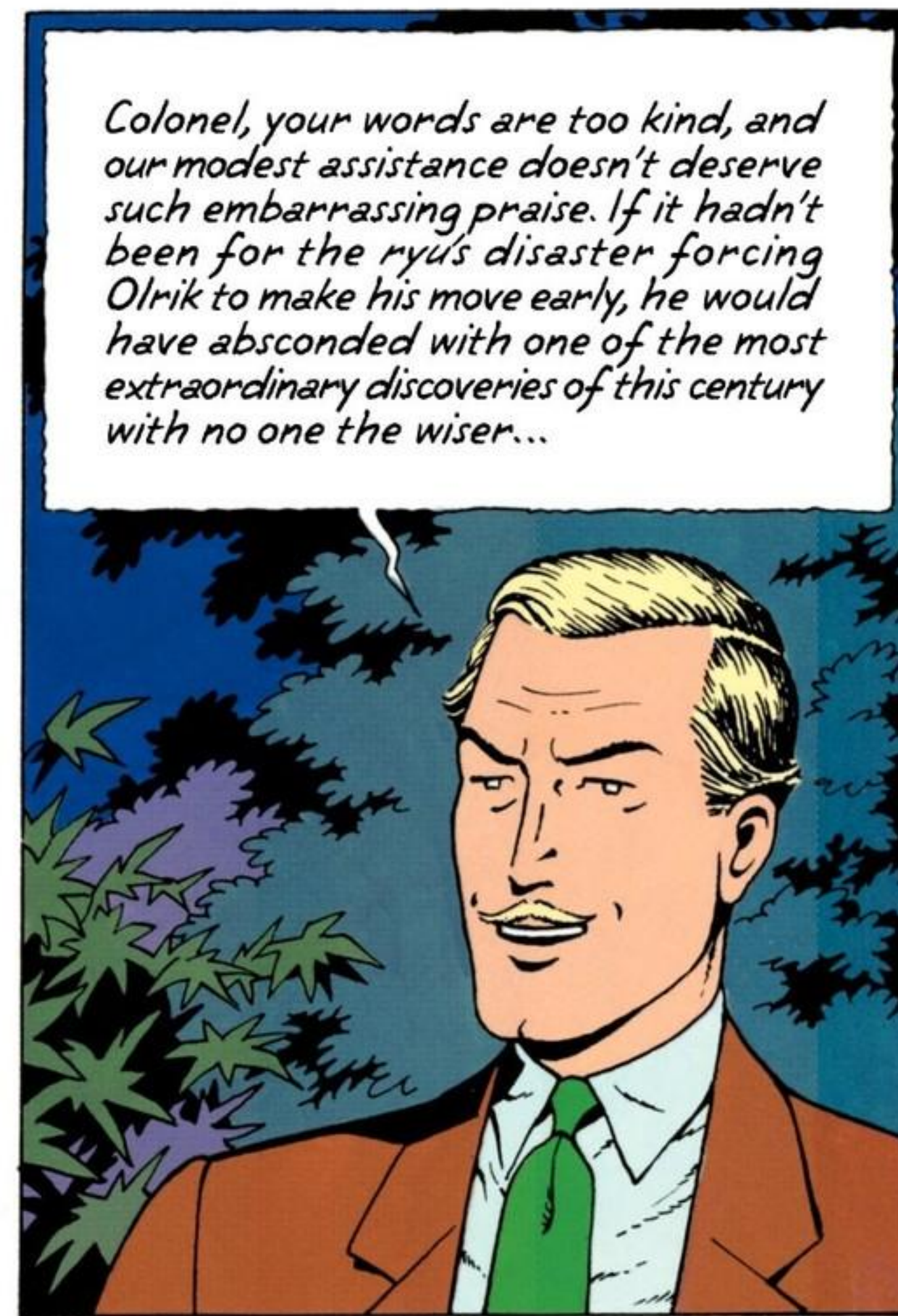
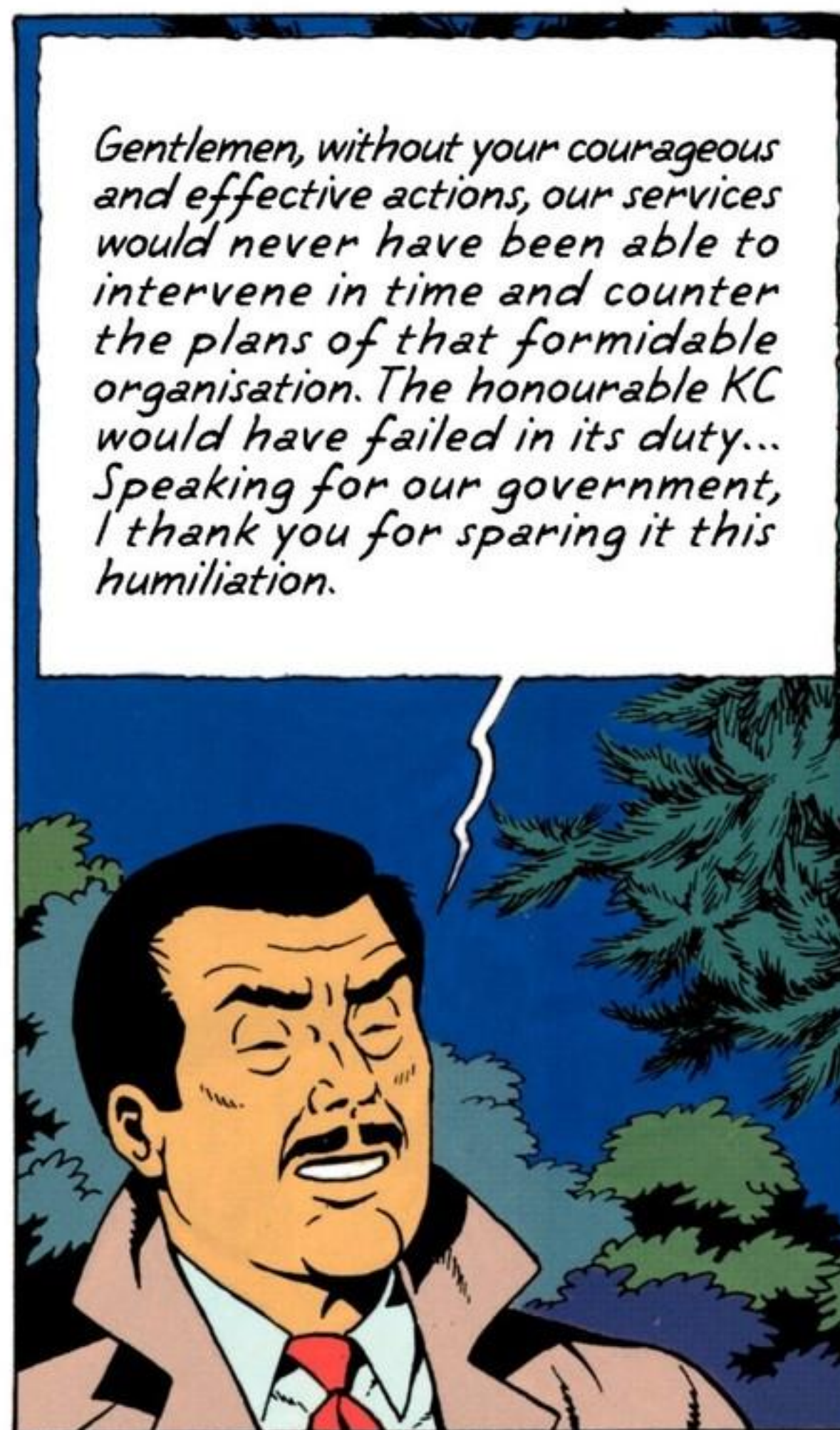


Fortunately, Kim had no idea that the briefcase was not
only indestructible, waterproof and equipped with a radio
beacon... But also came with a self-destruct mechanism,
in case a non-authorised person ever attempted to open
it without the secret code.

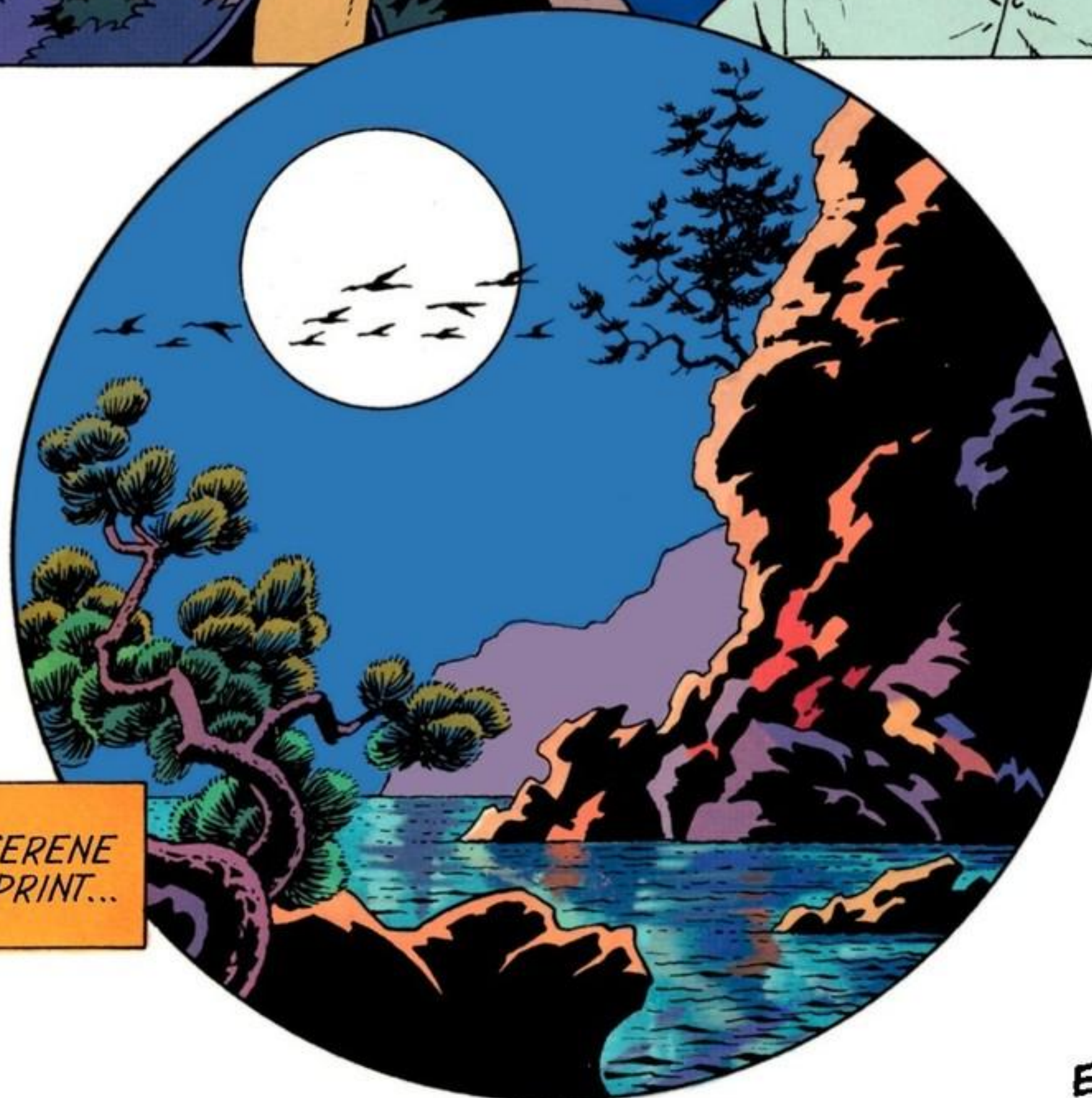




*REPUTATION.



BUT SUPERINTENDENT HASUMI INTERRUPTS THE MUTUAL CONGRATULATIONS WITH A MESSAGE...

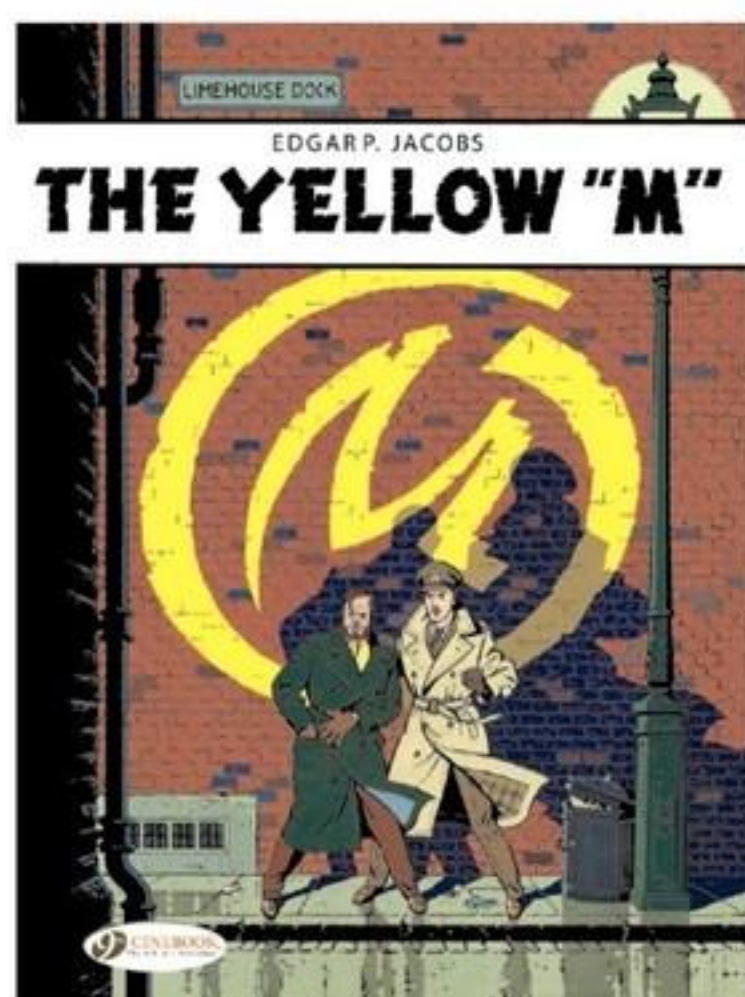


AND THE MOON RISES OVER SAGAMI BAY, SERENE AND PURE AS A HIROSHIGE WOODBLOCK PRINT...

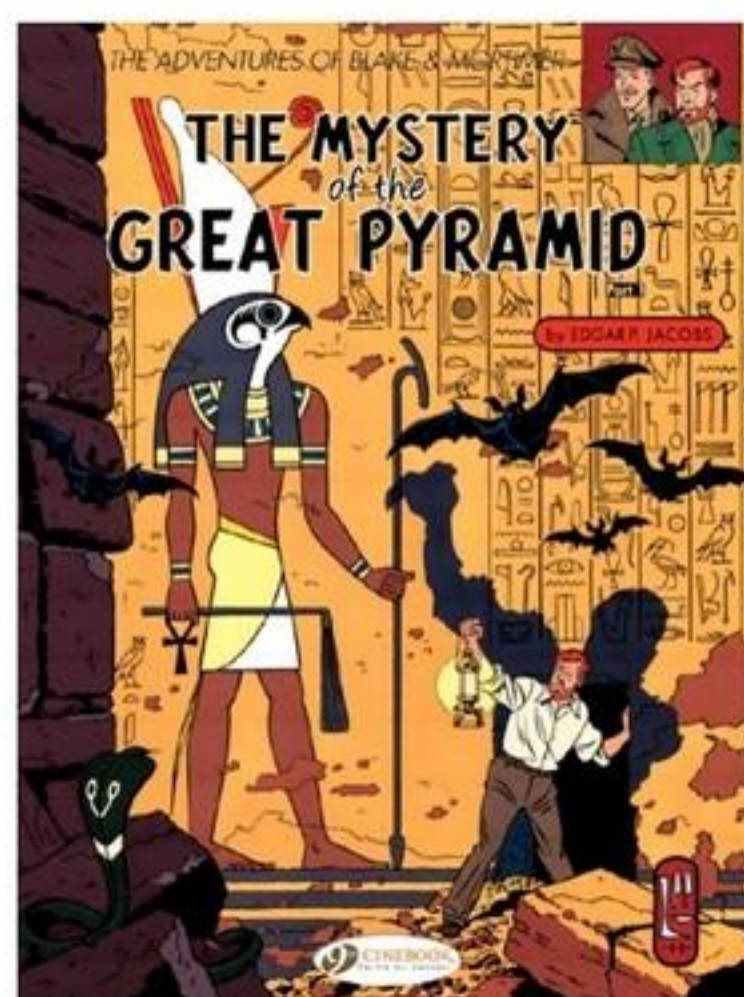
THE END

E.P. JACOBS - BOB DE MOOR. 1990

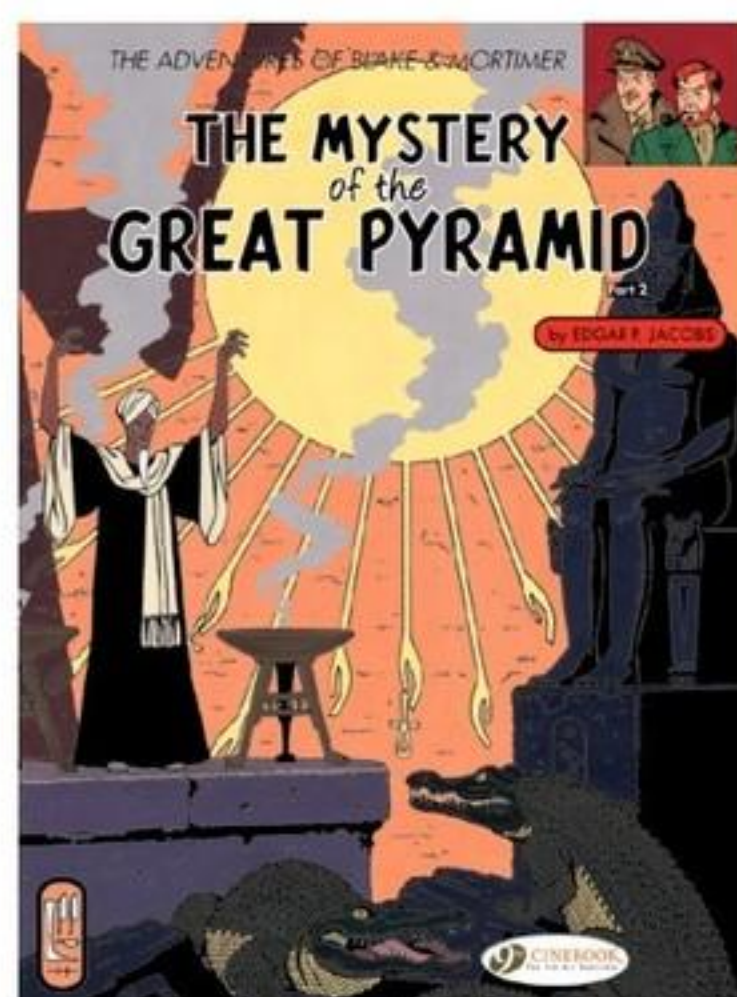
THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER



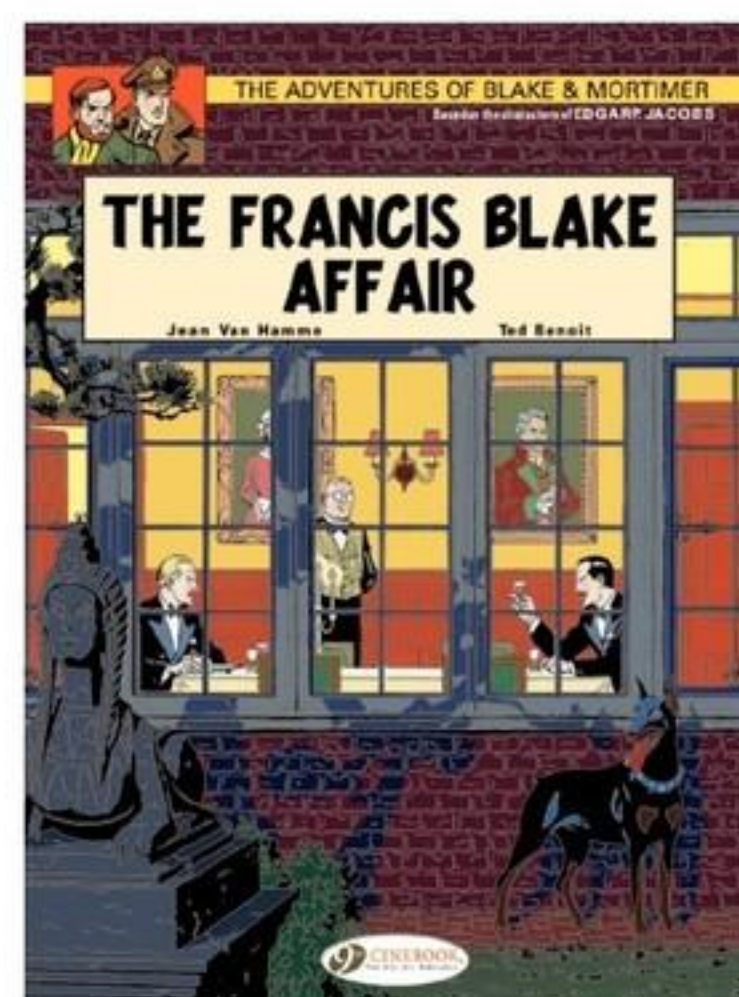
1-The Yellow "M"
EDGAR P. JACOBS



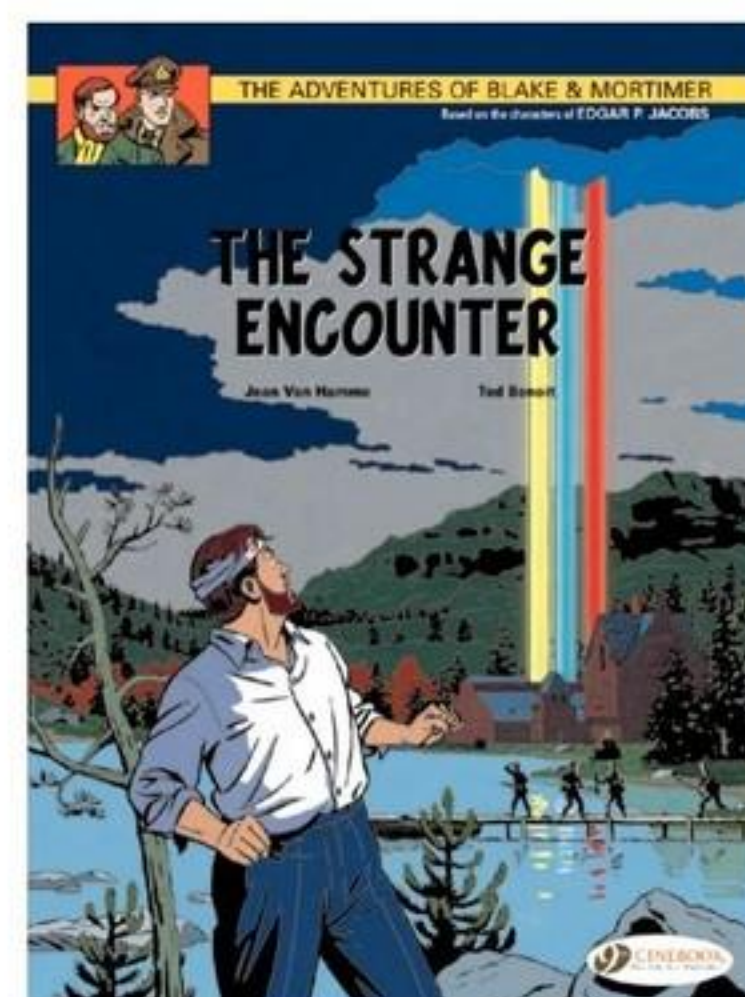
2-The Mystery of the Great Pyramid Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



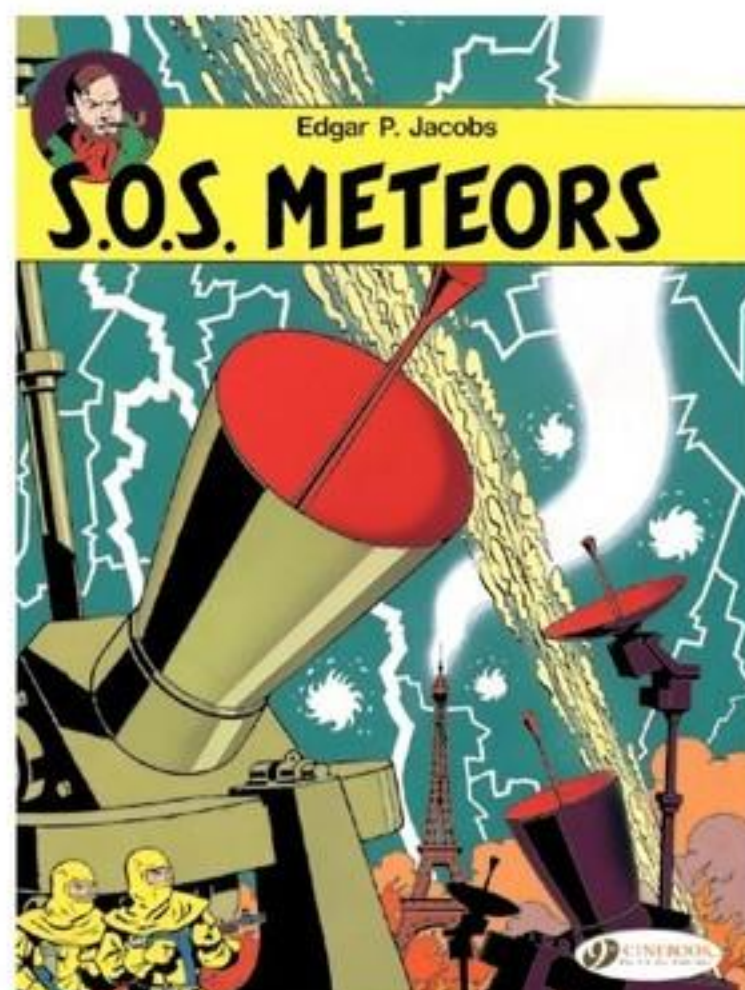
3-The Mystery of the Great Pyramid Part 2
EDGAR P. JACOBS



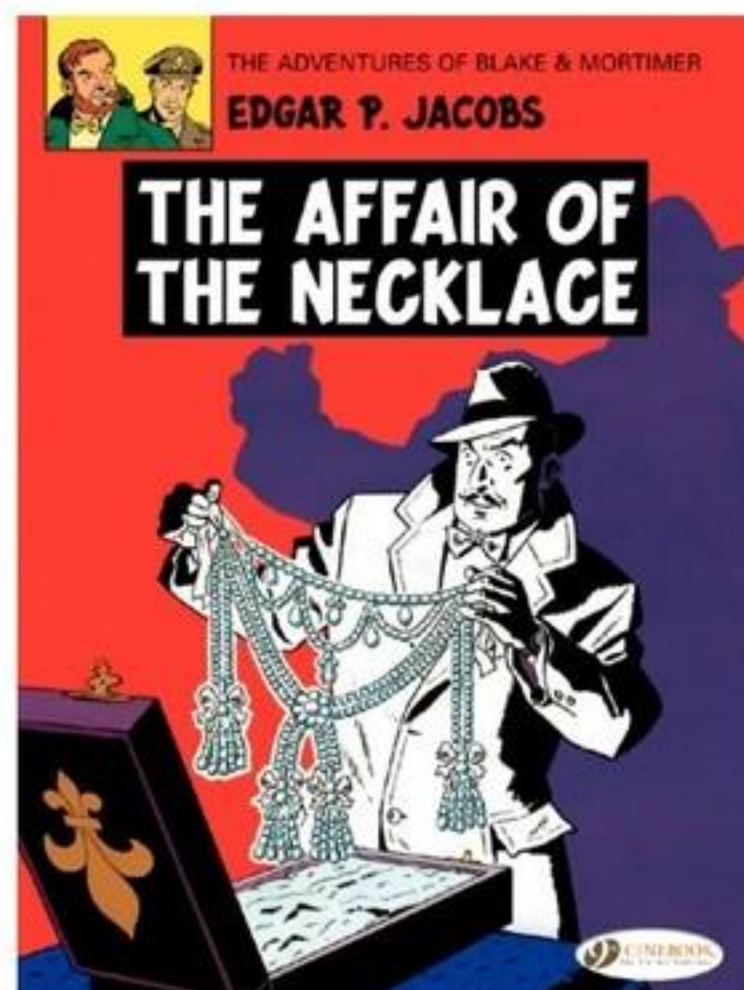
4-The Francis Blake Affair
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



5-The Strange Encounter
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



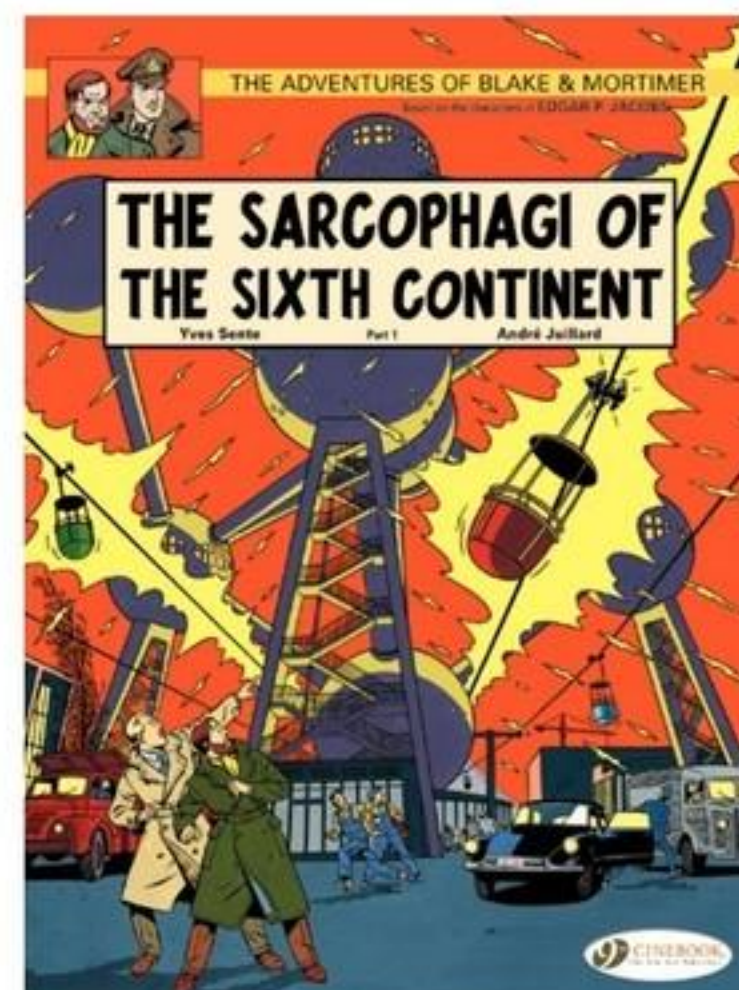
6-S.O.S. Meteors
EDGAR P. JACOBS



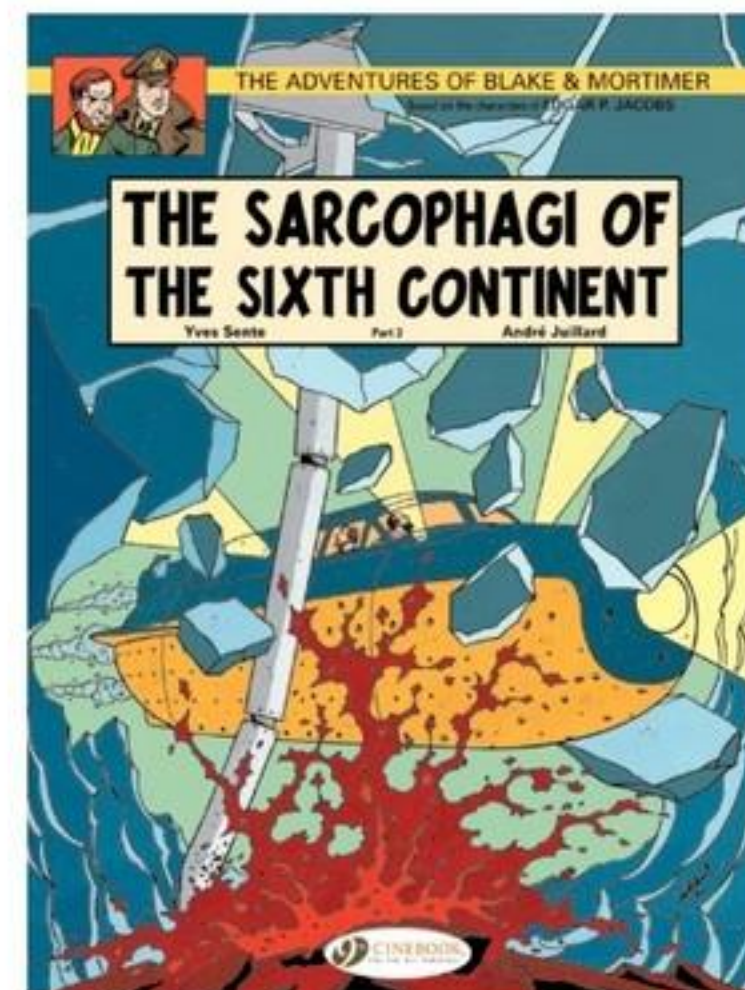
7-The Affair of the Necklace
EDGAR P. JACOBS



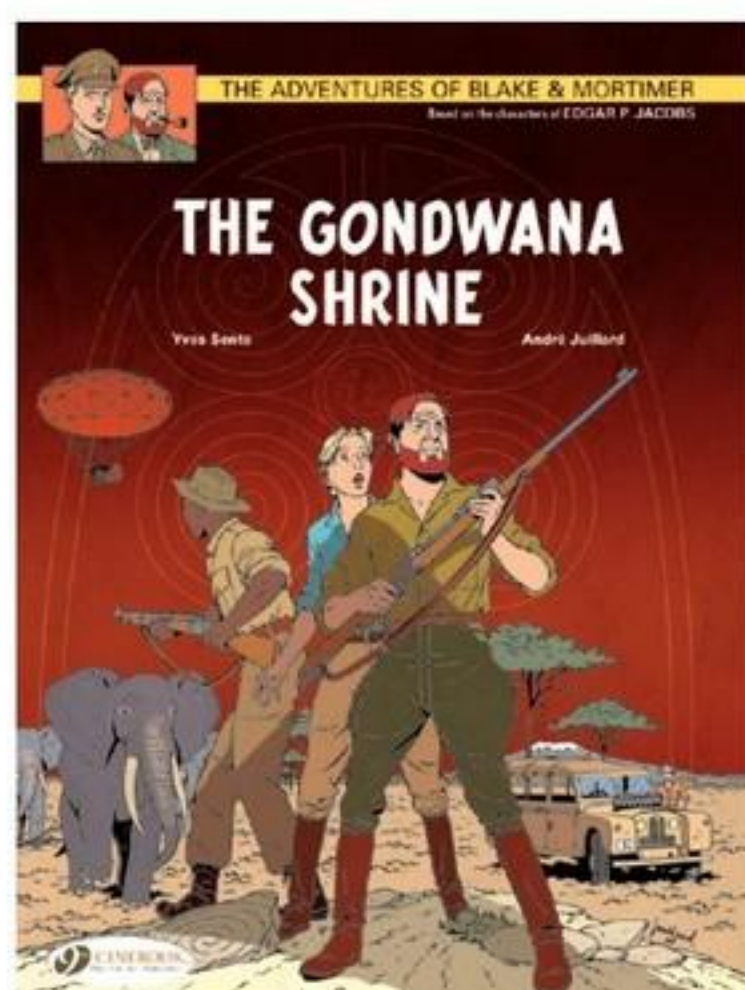
8-The Voronov Plot
SENTE - JUILLARD



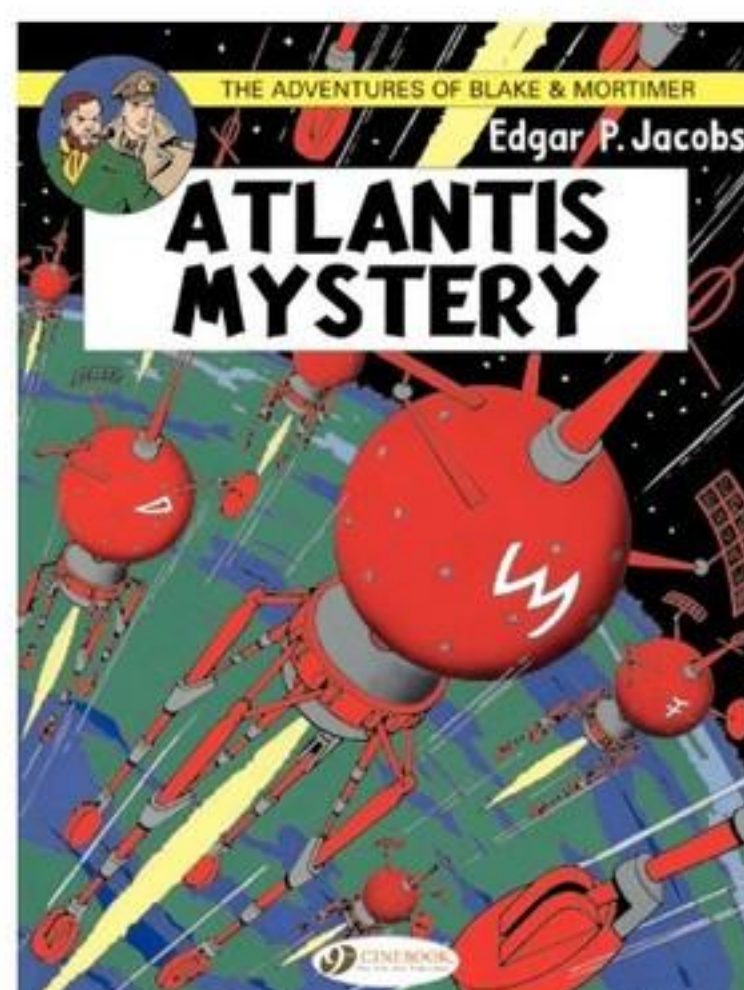
9-The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent Part 1
SENTE - JUILLARD



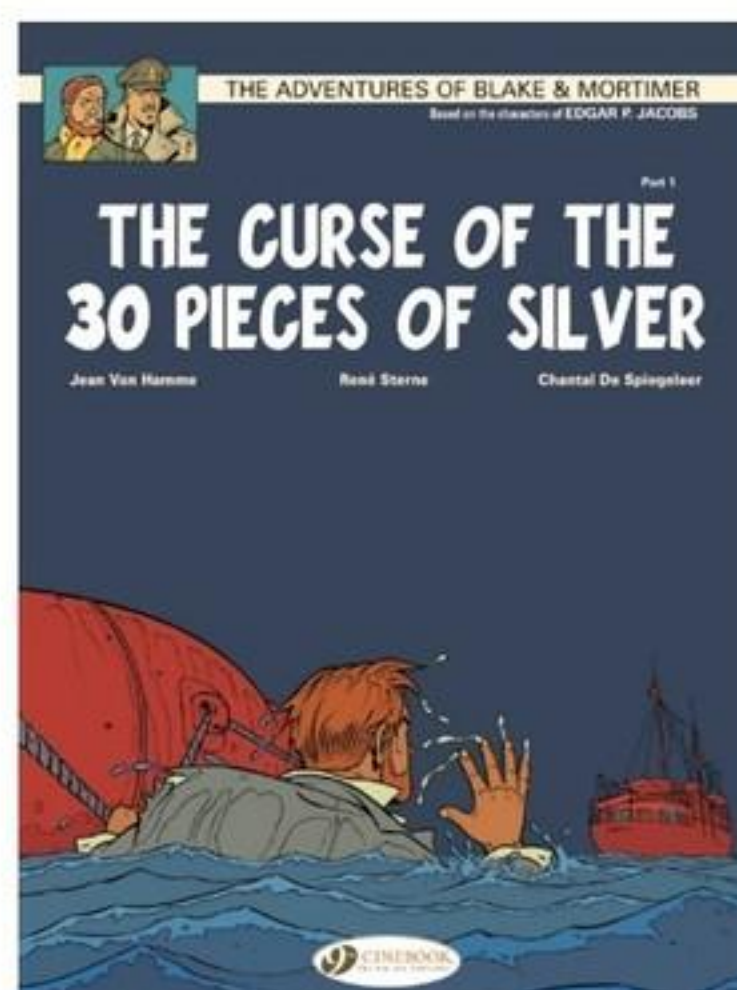
10-The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent Part 2
SENTE - JUILLARD



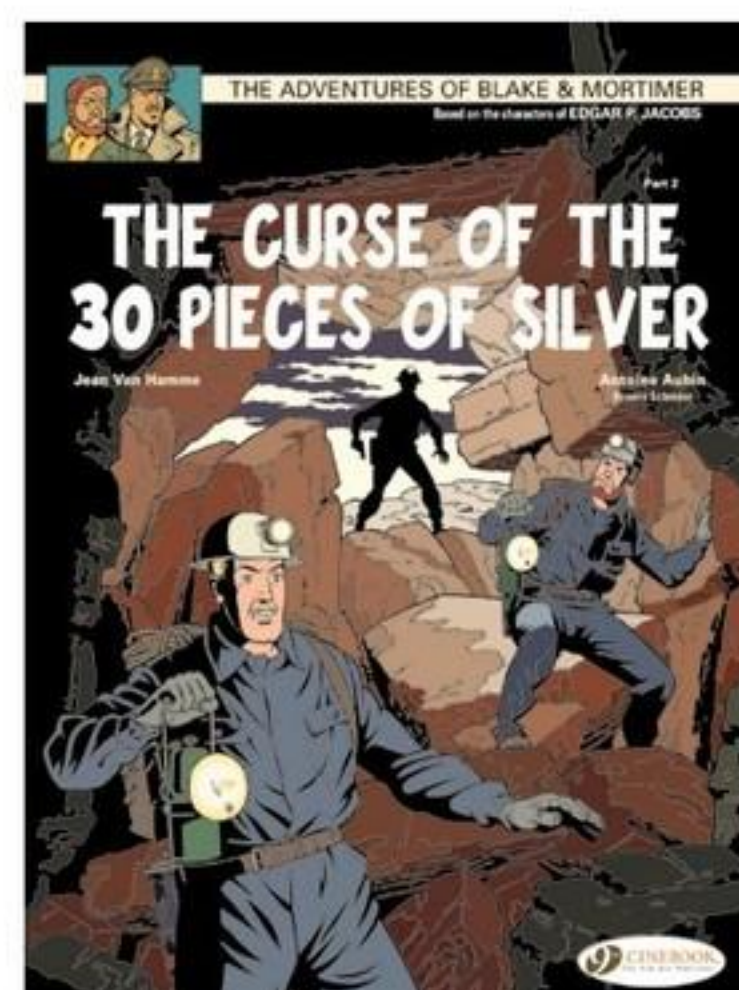
11-The Gondwana Shrine
SENTE - JUILLARD



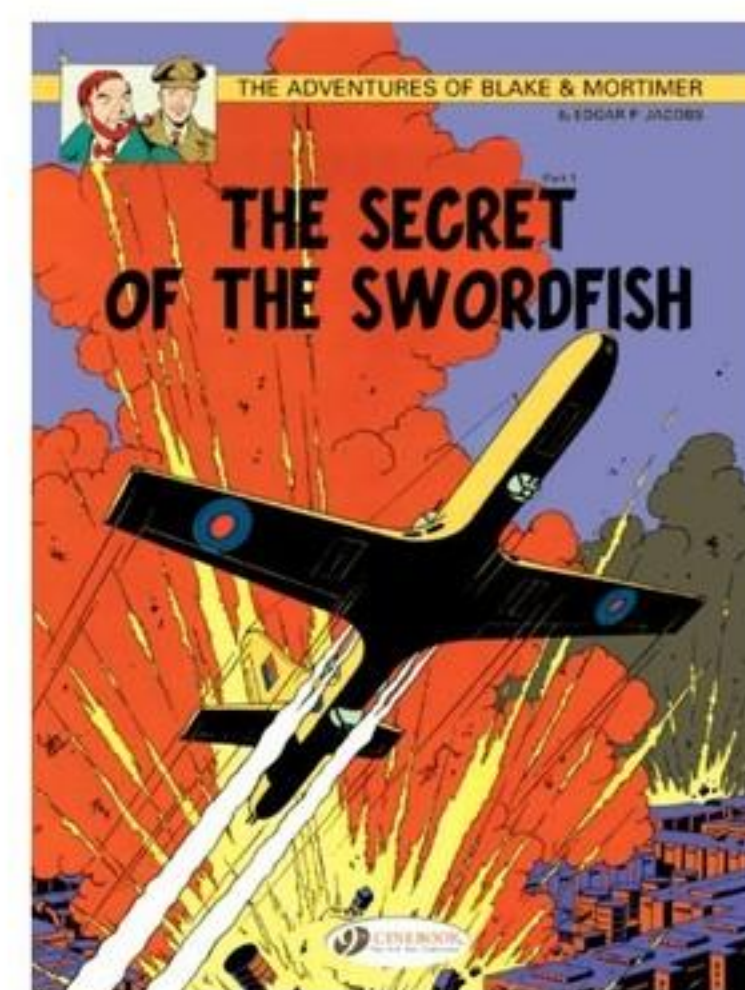
12-Atlantis Mystery
EDGAR P. JACOBS



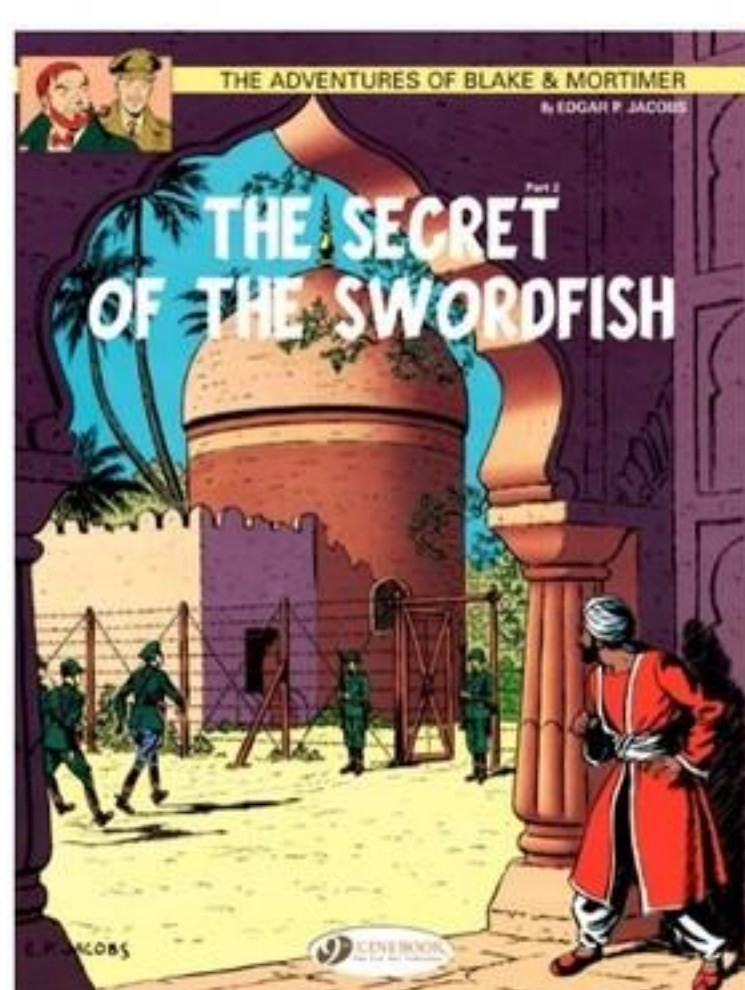
13-The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver Part 1
VAN HAMME - STERNE - DE SPIEGELEER



14-The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver Part 2
VAN HAMME - AUBIN - SCHREDER



15-The Secret of the Swordfish Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



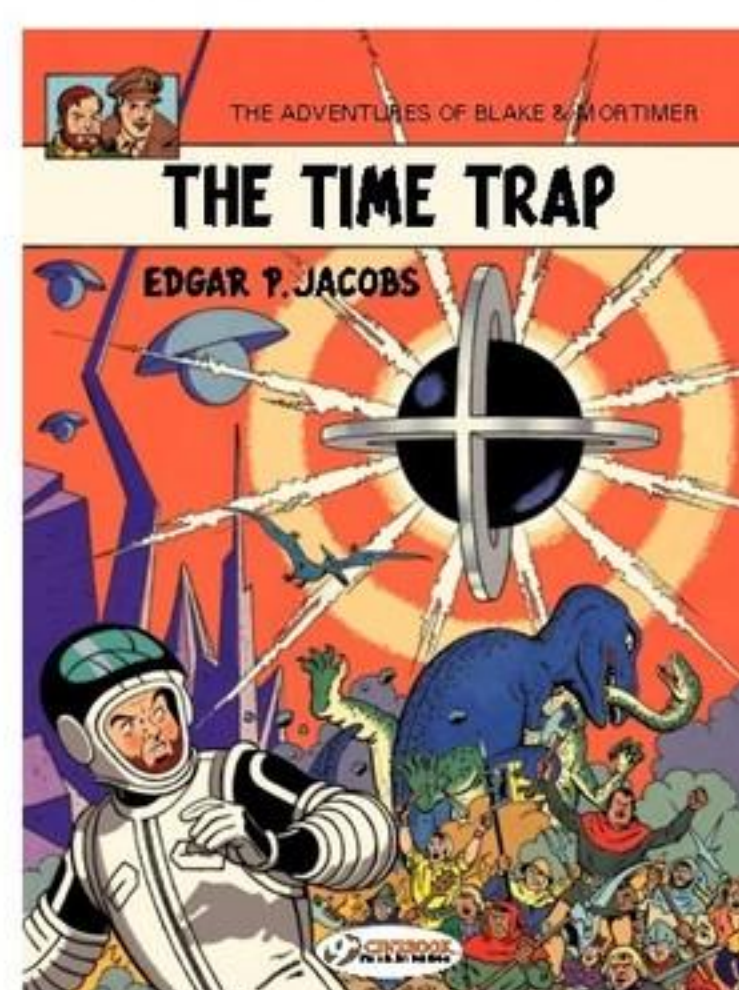
16-The Secret of the Swordfish Part 2
EDGAR P. JACOBS



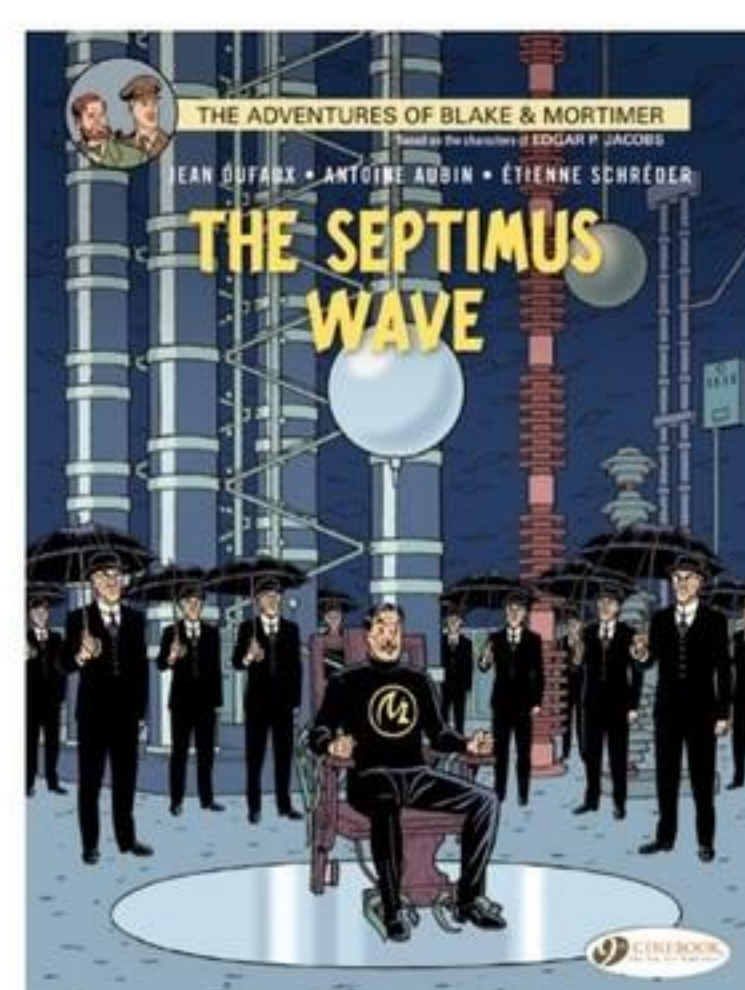
17-The Secret of the Swordfish Part 3
EDGAR P. JACOBS



18-The Oath of the Five Lords
SENTE - JUILLARD



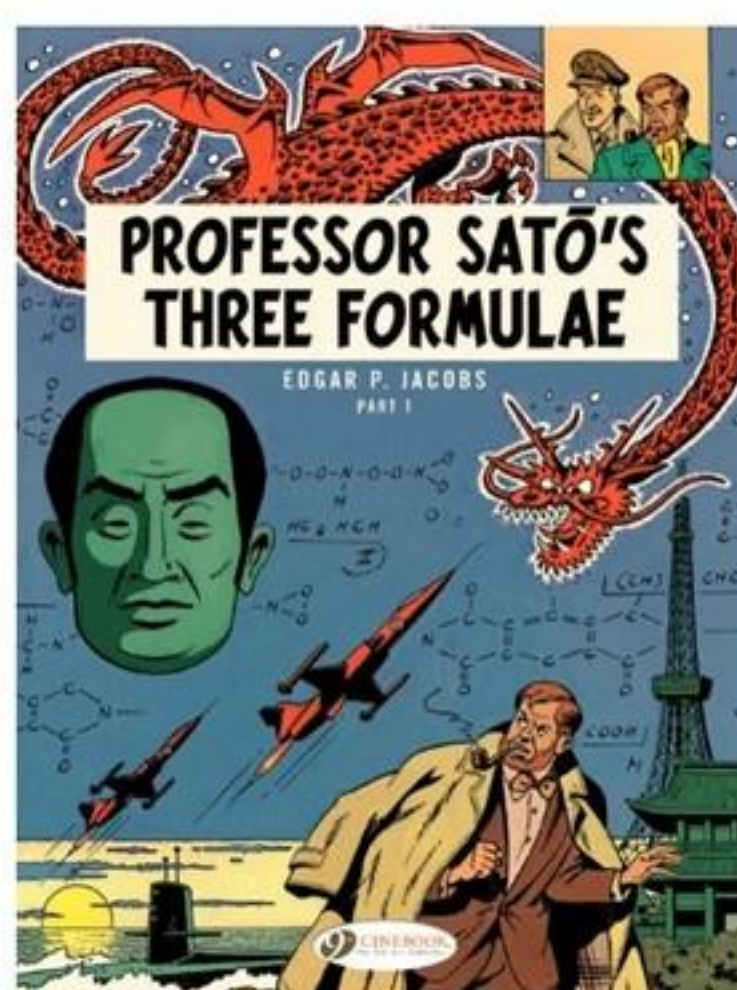
19-The Time Trap
EDGAR P. JACOBS



20-The Septimus Wave
DUFAUX - AUBIN - SCHREDER



20-Plutarch's Staff
SENTE - JUILLARD

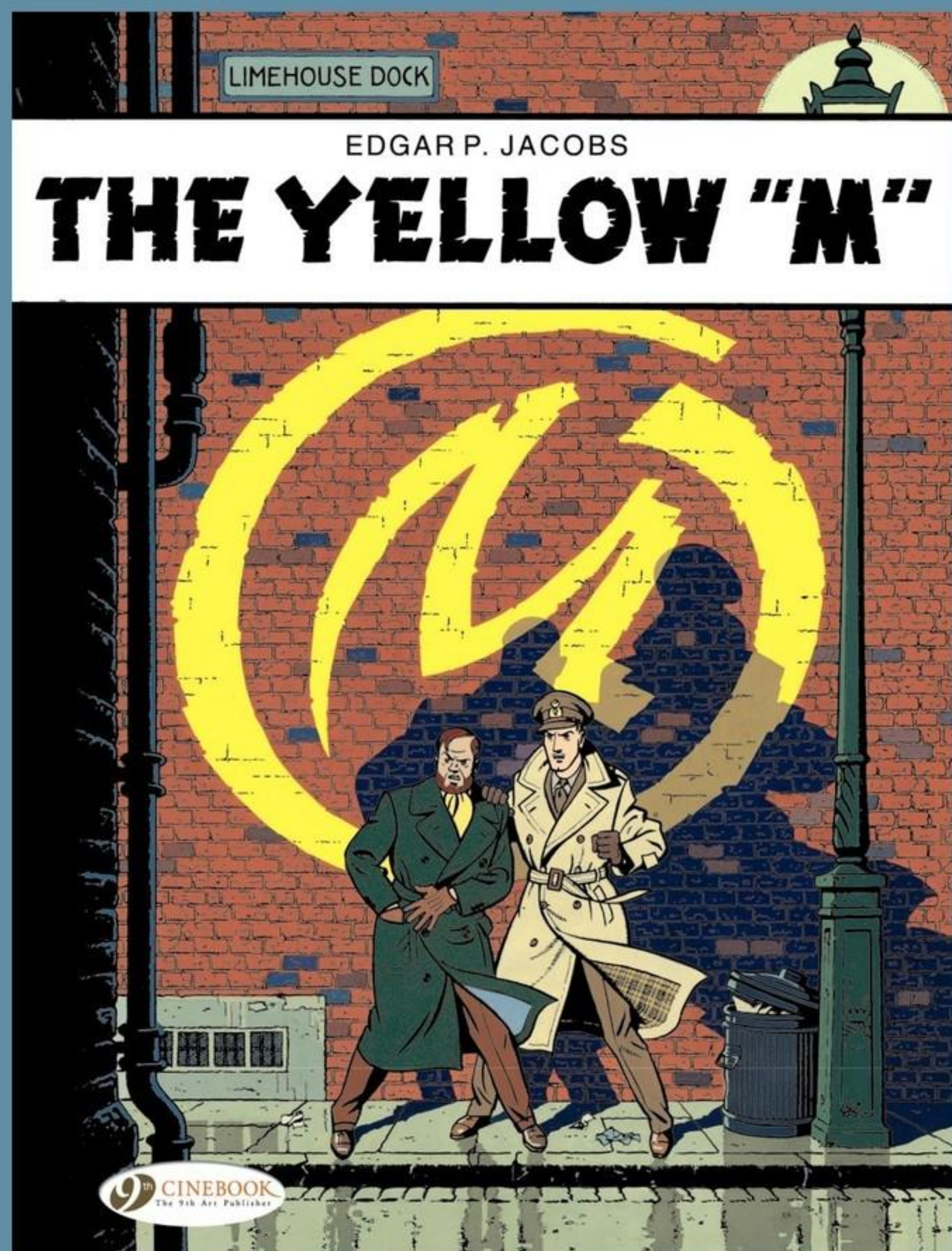


22-Professor Satō's Three Formulae
Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



23-Professor Satō's Three Formulae
Part 2
JACOBS - DE MOOR

EDGAR P. JACOBS



THE YELLOW "M"

London's walls resound with the incredible exploits of the "Yellow Mark." The spectacular actions of this mysterious criminal are on the increase: holding up the Bank of England, robbing the imperial crown... No one seems able to stop him. He is so audacious that he lets the police know in advance where he will commit his crimes, each time ridiculing Scotland Yard a little more.

The apparent ease with which he evades police schemes begins to worry the highest authorities of the country. The Home Office asks Captain Francis Blake to solve the mystery and discover the identity of the man who hides behind the Yellow Mark. The captain immediately takes as partner his old friend, Professor Philip Mortimer, whose scientific knowledge will be invaluable in solving this extremely complex enigma. Who hides behind the Yellow Mark?

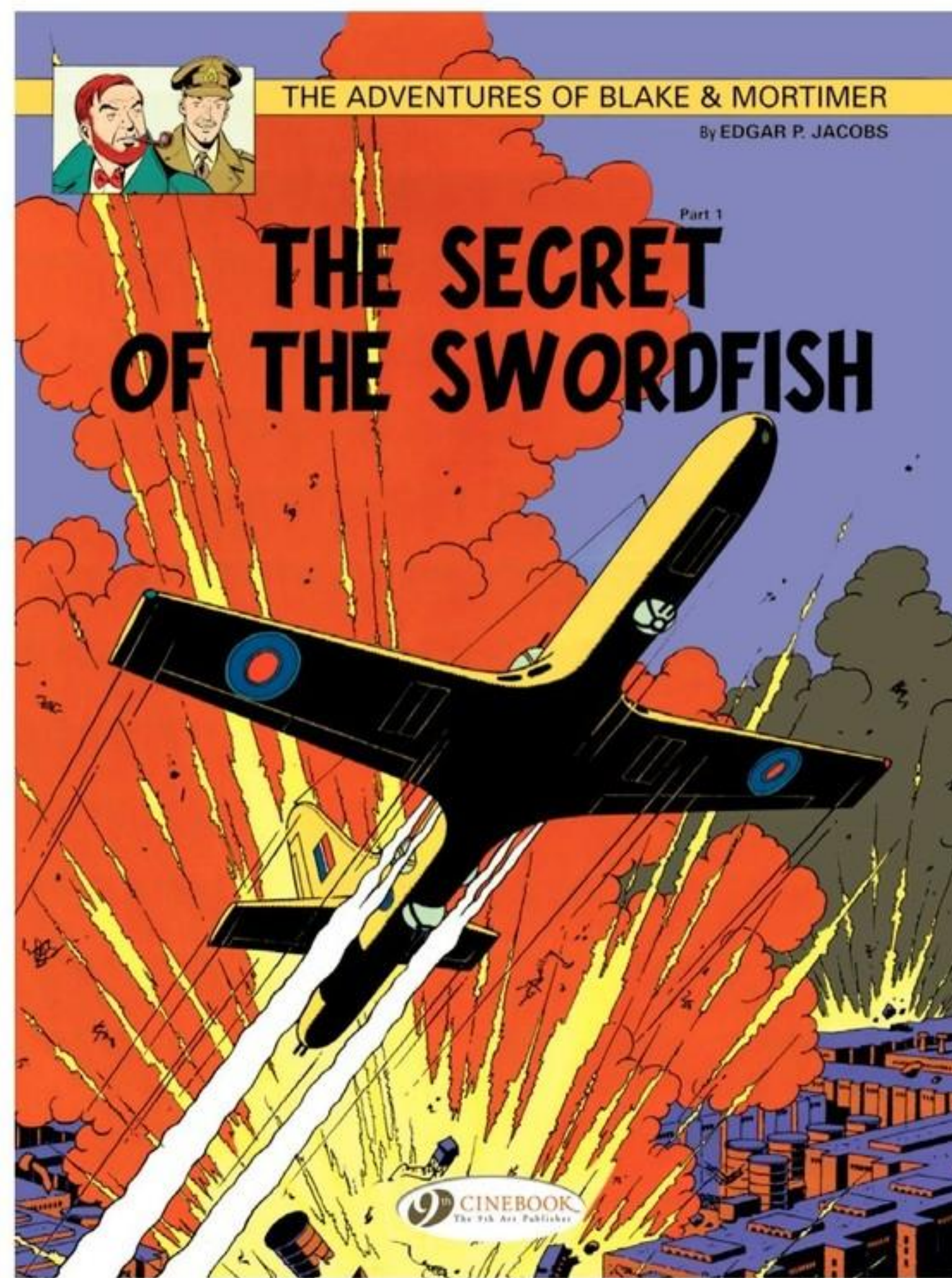


© Editions Blake & Mortimer / Studio Jacobs (Dargaud-Lombard s.a.) - E.P. Jacobs

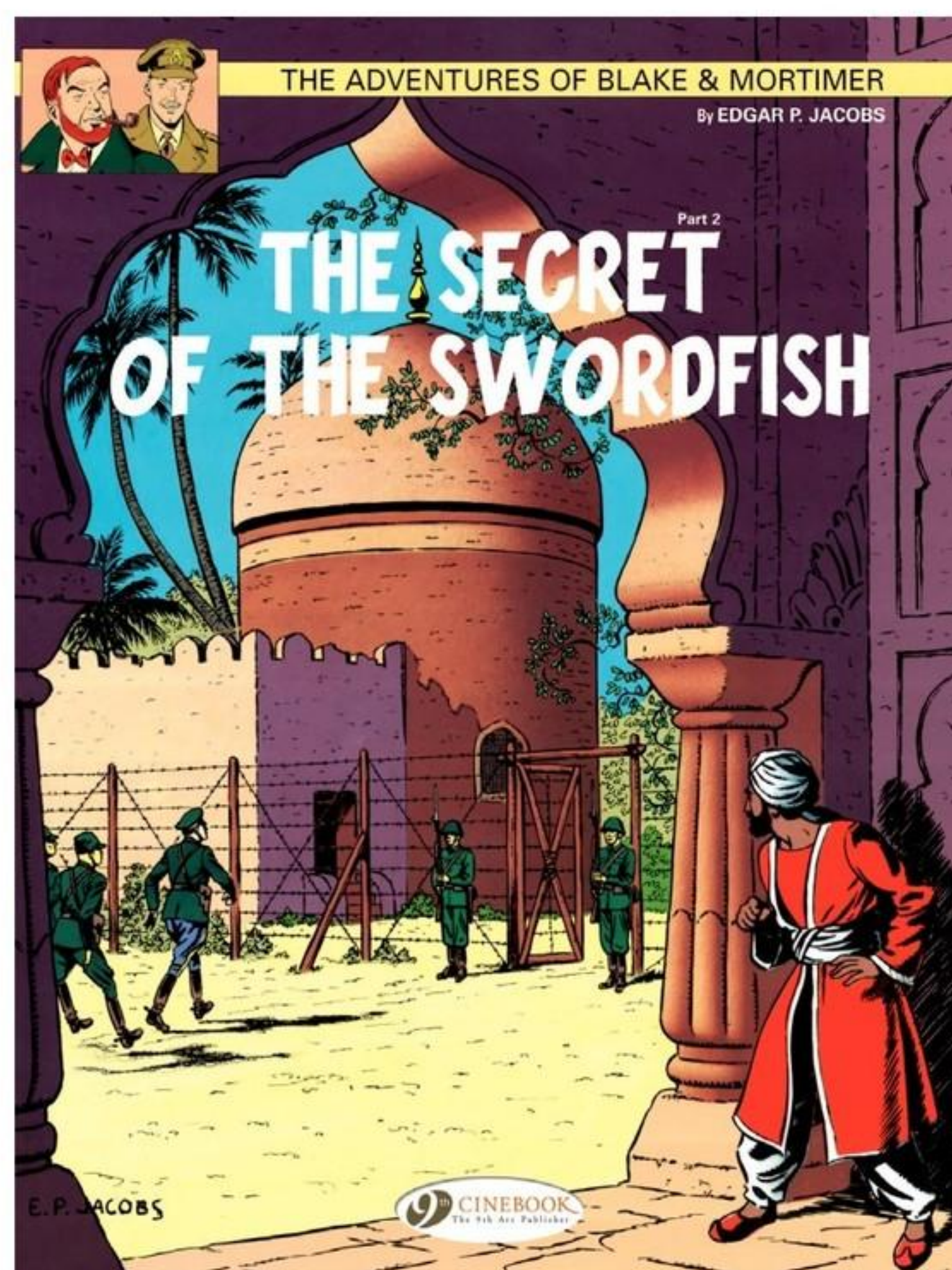




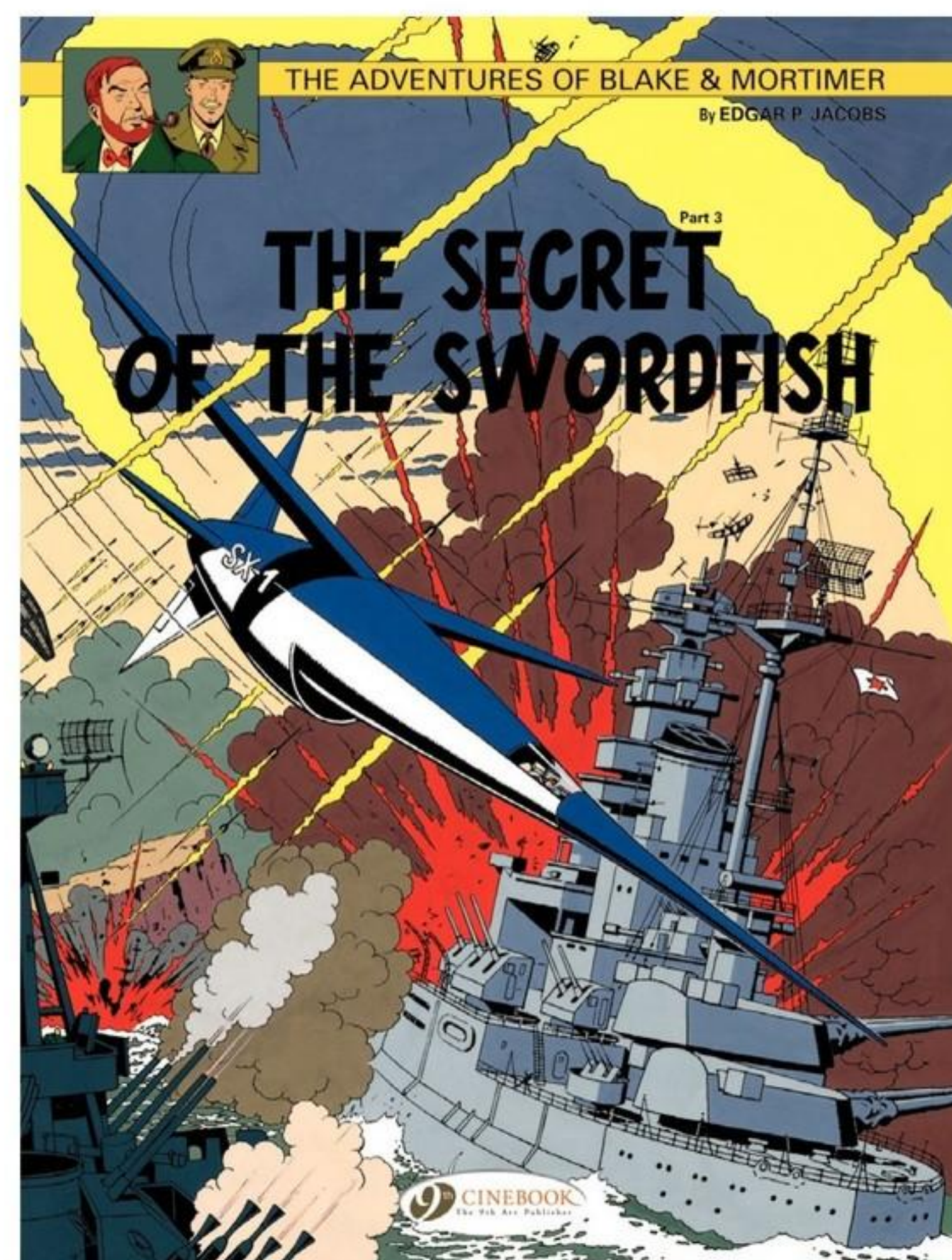
THE SECRET OF THE SWORDFISH



The Incredible Chase



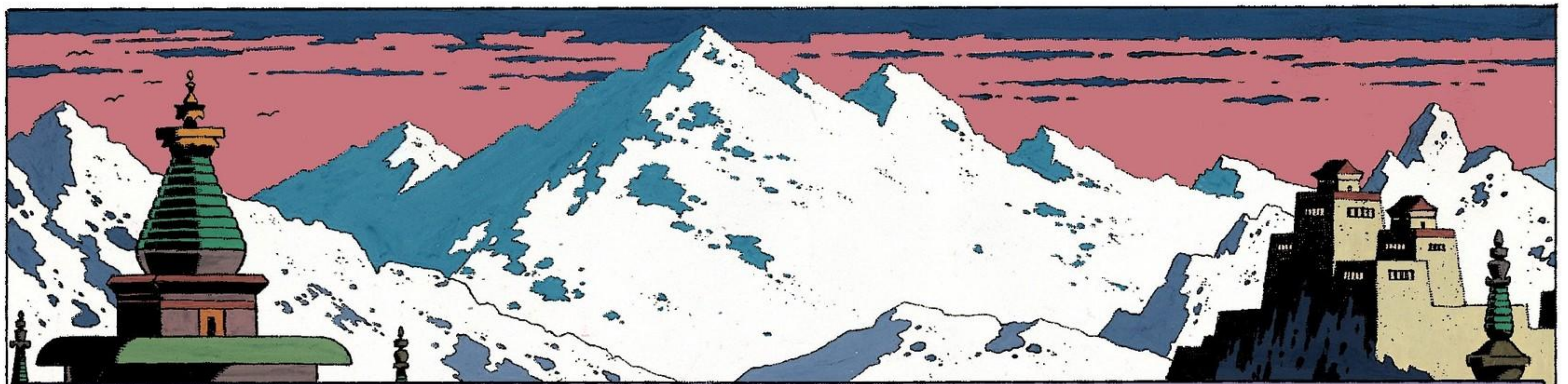
Mortimer's escape



SX1 Strikes Back

THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES OF FRANCIS BLAKE AND PHILIP MORTIMER—AND THEIR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH OLRİK.

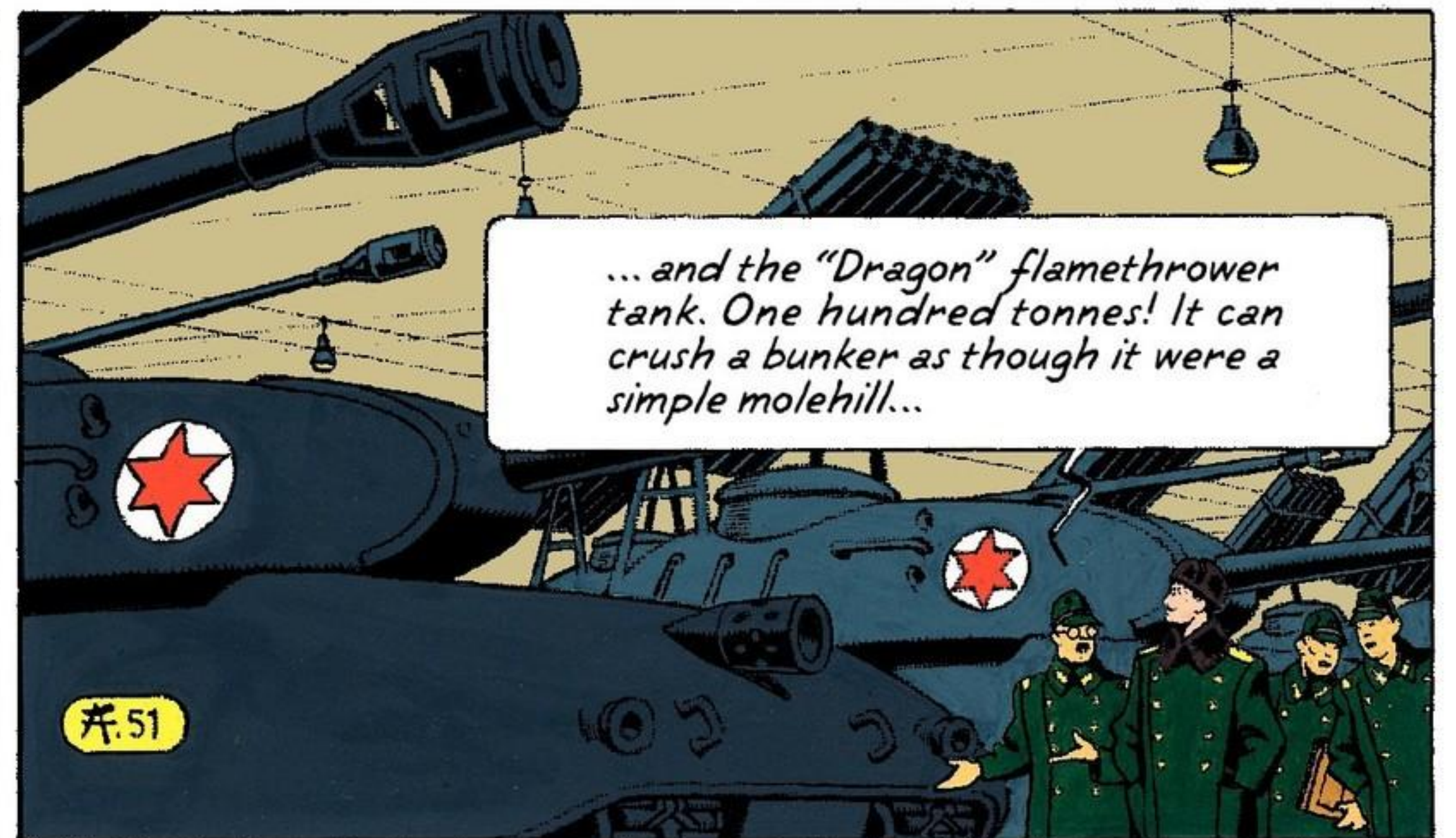
In a past almost, but not entirely, like ours, the world lives in dread of a new power, an empire centred in Tibet and led by a megalomaniac. When the inevitable attack comes, it destroys all opposition, and capital cities across the planet are left burning. But, in Great Britain, Professor Mortimer, inventor of a mysterious weapon named the Swordfish, and his friend and protector Captain Blake, have escaped the destruction, and must make their way to a secret base...



WHILE THROUGHOUT A WORRIED WORLD PACTS ARE DRAWN AND SUMMITS ARE CONVENED, THE MYSTERIOUS "YELLOW EMPIRE," HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN ASIA, HAS JUST COMPLETED FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE MOST HORRIFIC, MOST CRIMINAL OF WARS. COLONEL OLRİK, A CRAFTY AND UNSCRUPULOUS ADVENTURER AS WELL AS CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE AND MILITARY ADVISOR TO THE USURPER BASAM DAMDU, EMPEROR OF TIBET, IS MAKING A LAST INSPECTION OF THE LHASA ARSENAL, GUIDED BY COLONEL TAKSA, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE ARMY'S TECHNICAL ORGANISATION.



... Finally, let's conclude with the super-bazooka, recoilless artillery capable of firing 500 rockets per minute...



... and the "Dragon" flamethrower tank. One hundred tonnes! It can crush a bunker as though it were a simple molehill...



... and now that we have seen what we could call the conventional equipment, Colonel, here are the atomic weapons: rockets and drones that can obliterate the world in mere hours!...

Remarkable! However, we will only use them if we are forced to. Our goal is not to destroy, but to conquer...

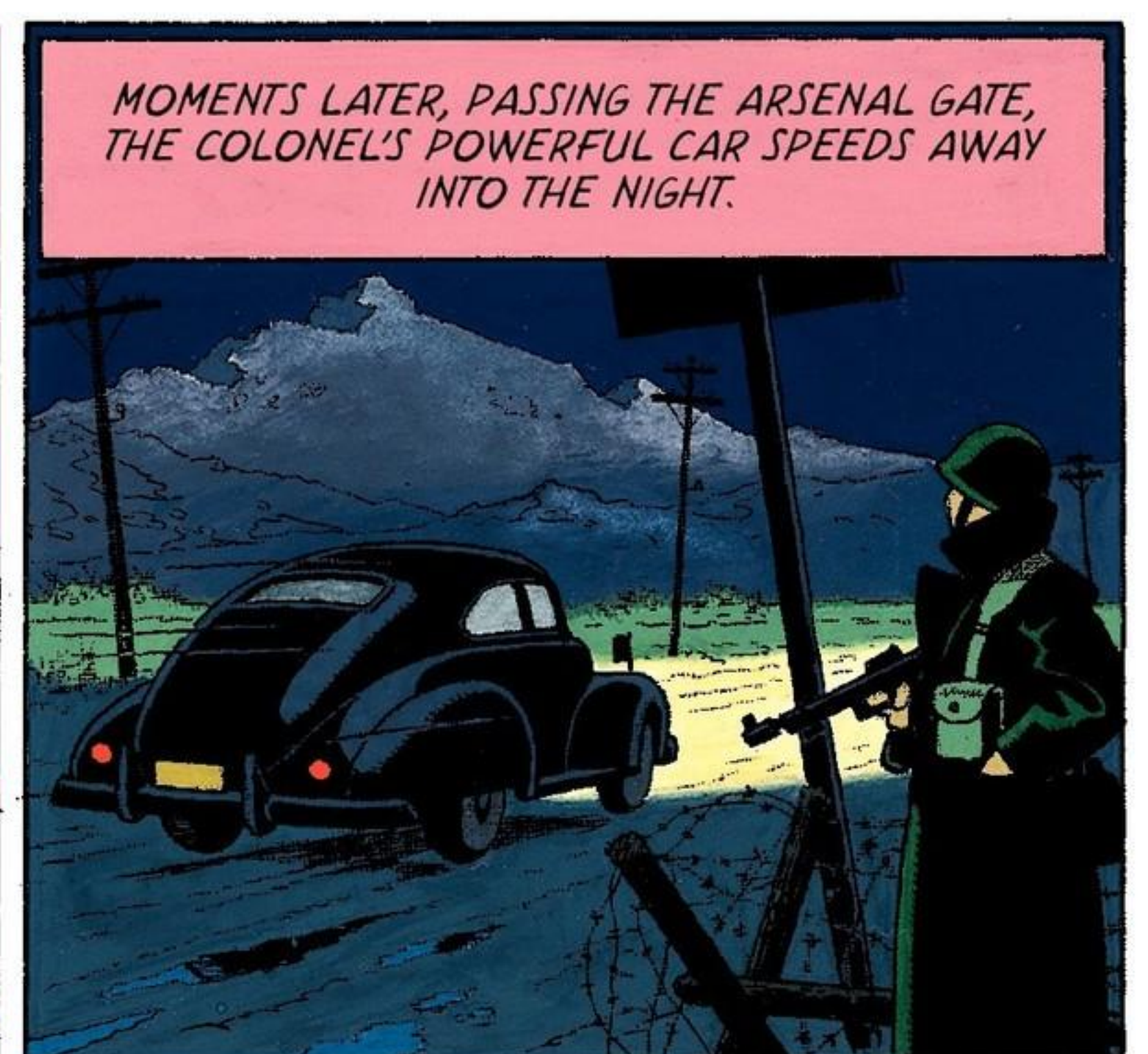


I fully understand, Colonel. Which is why we developed even more efficient weapons that can eliminate the enemy while keeping his economic potential intact. For example, the green gas GX3, which kills through any protective mask by radioactivity. And we've already done better with... Oh, but I apologise. I talk and talk, and...



Colonel!...

Indeed. Time flies, and I'm expected at the airfield. Thus, I am forced, against my will, to bid you farewell. Rest assured, though, Colonel, that I shall not fail to report to the Emperor the zeal with which you have performed your difficult mission...



MOMENTS LATER, PASSING THE ARSENAL GATE, THE COLONEL'S POWERFUL CAR SPEEDS AWAY INTO THE NIGHT.

JACOBS

1946, the Swordfish, starting point of a masterful work

Article taken from the book: *The World of Edgar P. Jacobs* (Le Lombard publishers)



When, in 1946, daring publisher Raymond Leblanc decided to launch the magazine *Tintin*, Hergé called upon the services of his friend Jacobs. The latter proposed a medieval series, 'Roland the Bold', for which he wrote a complete script, but the project was discarded because there were already too many period costumed adventures in the magazine's layout.

Jacobs then proposed *The Secret of the Swordfish*, a futuristic series that was to open the cycle of Blake & Mortimer's adventures. The story was a great success with the public right from the start, and impressed many comic creators.

This episode was a reflection of the terrible conflict that had just ended with the terrifying destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Jacobs considered it a somewhat separate work. It was obvious that the Tibetan conquerors were really transposed Japanese, but page after page, Jacobs displayed unparalleled originality.

Regarding the technical side of dialogues, he eventually learnt, after some understandable trial-and-error, the proper placing of speech bubbles (the original publication of *The U Ray* didn't include any), eventually arriving, by the end of the second episode, at a chef-d'oeuvre of narrative figuration.

The unbalance between the end of the story and its beginning was such that, for its publication in graphic novel format, the author reworked the first 18 pages, even bringing them down to 17. Thus the lead-in became equally strong as the conclusion and, considering the end result, we can only agree with Jacobs' decision.

The Secret of the Swordfish reprised the idea of a submersible plane, which had first been seen at the beginning of the 20th century and was made popular by Jules Verne in *Master of the World* (1904). During the interwar period, the idea was used in the comic strip 'Tim Tyler's Luck' by Lyman Young, and even by Walt Disney with Mickey Mouse's 'submarplane'. There would however be two major differences between those stories and the *Swordfish*: the exemplary solidity of the script, and above all the design of the robotic machine, whose aerodynamic profile wasn't about to become outmoded any time soon.

To create the world-liberating machine, the conscientious Jacobs even hesitated between several devices, one of which was no less than an outstanding foreshadowing of the Polaris system! But in the end, it was the extraordinary white and blue Swordfish that won out – and still fascinates us today. This was a far cry from the approximate inventions that had come before Jacob's creation.



Cover of *Tintin* magazine (November 28, 1946)
© Edgar P. Jacobs

Correspondence between Claude le Gallo and Edgar P. Jacobs, November 20, 1967

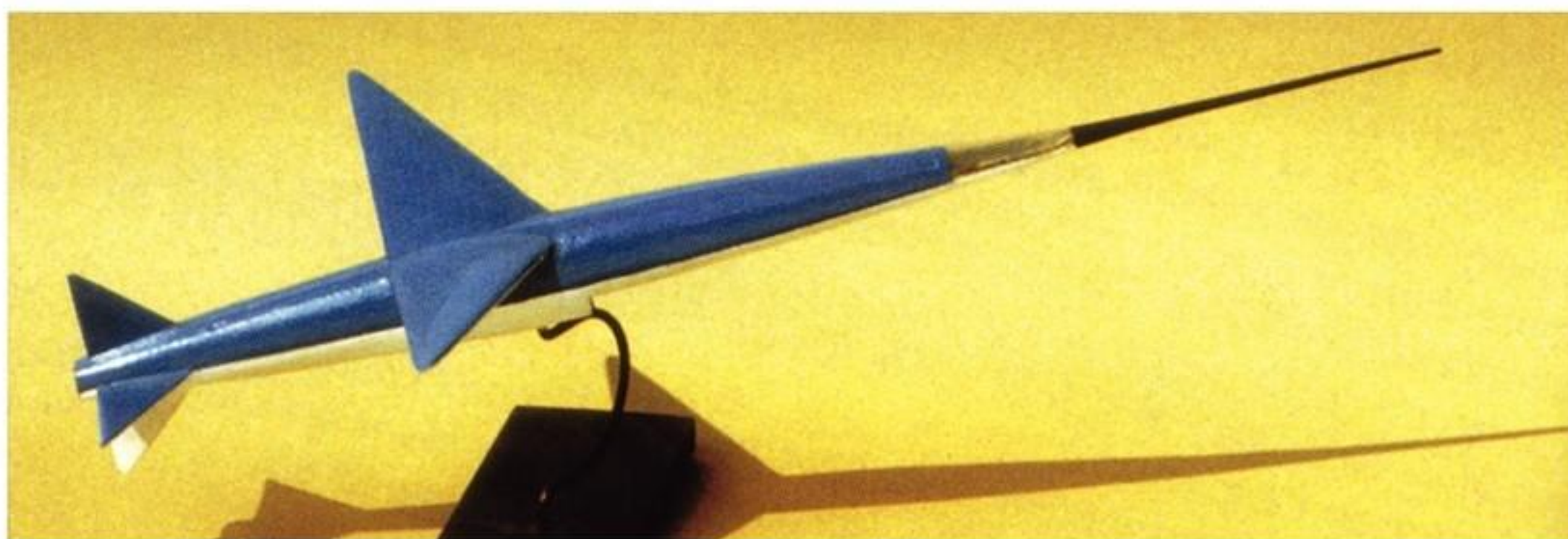
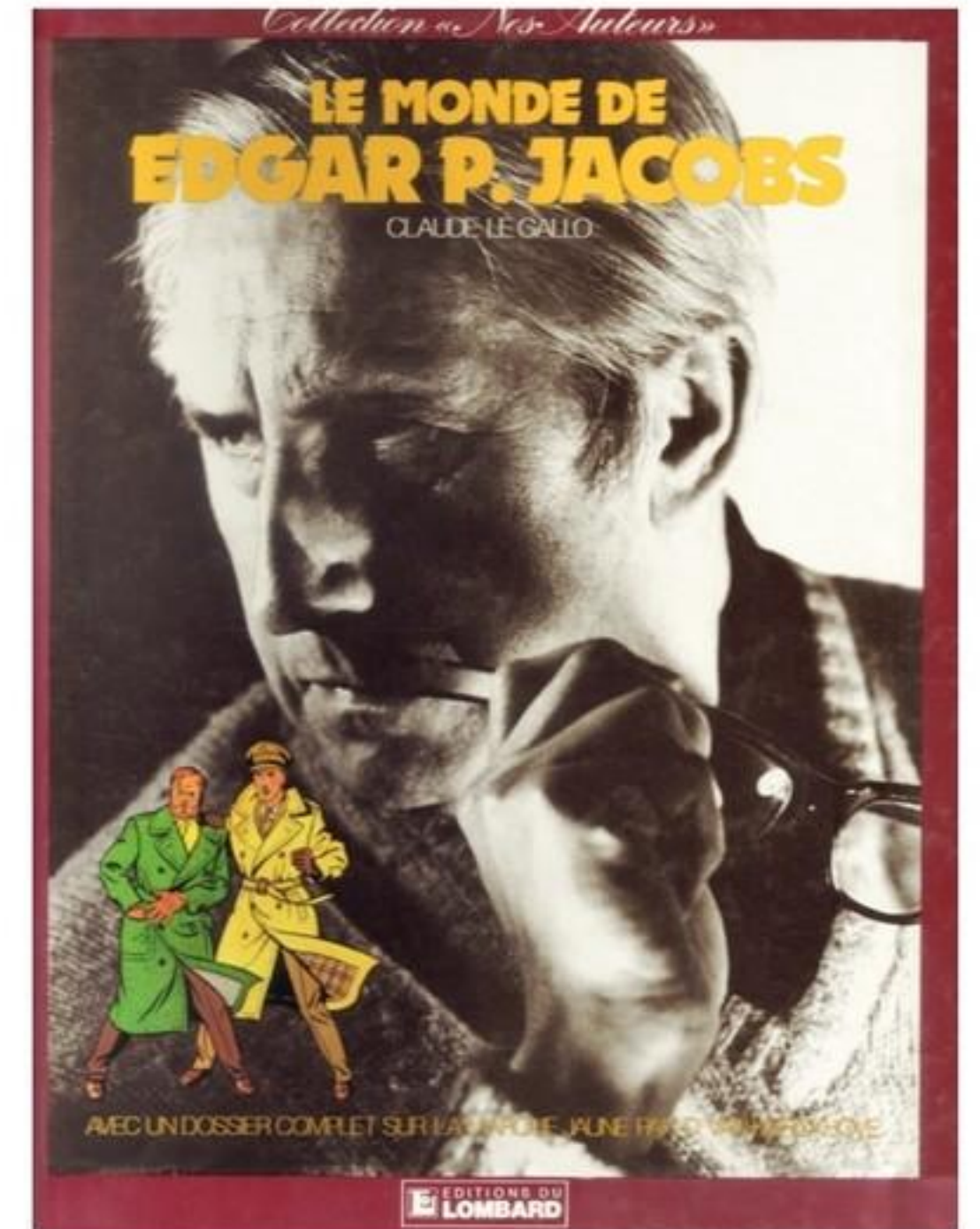
In order to allow for the revenge and liberation of the nations defeated by the Yellow Empire's lightning attack, I had to find, besides a base of operations (the secret base of the Strait of Hormuz), a weapon that would be nigh invulnerable as well as powerful enough to neutralize the invaders' enormous war machine, but also sufficiently small and easy to handle to evade their hunt. Which immediately excluded any idea of a surface base or vehicle. Indeed we had no, or almost no, documentation on recent weapons – and next to nothing concerning nuclear weapons, rockets, radars, etc... We were still stuck with conventional armament and propeller planes... My first idea had considered four potential projects:

- A supersonic plane with a nuclear armament
- A ballistic missile submarine (that launched while submerged)
- An underwater missile base (at the bottom of a lake)
- A supersonic plane operating from an underwater base

I'd eventually opted for the submarine plane but, although it was very daring at the time, it still remained a classic type of vehicle – aside from having a jet engine, being designed for remote control and flying out of the water. Its behaviour once in the air was more or less that of a 'stuka'. Strangely enough, where I'd extrapolated with wild abandon in *The U Ray*, now the fear of going beyond credibility, coupled with my dislike for American-style science-fiction, had me positively paralysed. Until, in the course of discussing that situation with an old friend, he swept aside

all my scruples and technical objections, encouraged me to move past this sudden faintheartedness and charge straight ahead into full-blown science-fiction (or rather what we still believed to be science-fiction!). In short, he managed to convince me, and then there was the Swordfish!

Once I'd accepted the principle, I launched into frenzied work. Keeping in mind, for the airframe, the different environments through which it would be called to perform – air and water – I made a series of very rough sketches and fairly quickly arrived at a silhouette that, to my eyes, seemed to meet the desired performance. Starting from there, I made a working drawing – plans, front view, side view, etc... – that I submitted for review to an expert in naval and aeronautical matters. Having concluded that no major impossibilities stood in the way of carrying out such a project, he built a model to scale. When I saw it, a name spontaneously came to my mind: swordfish! It had actually amply deserved that name, since I'd drawn inspiration from that fish's silhouette (as well as that of the shark) to create, from an aerodynamic standpoint, my machine's outline.



Model of the Swordfish
© Photos: Philippe Biermé

It is interesting to note that at the time that flying submarine was designed, a short-winged, slender-fuselage plane was not at all 'in'. On the contrary, the trend was all 'flying wings' and tail-less aircraft. I actually made a personal version of such an aircraft with Colonel Olrik's *Red Wing*. I'll mention also in passing the creation, still for the same story, of an Imperial fighter nicknamed the 'Flying Shark'. Seven years later, in 1953, the Americans unveiled an extraordinary plane, considered the most advanced of the time: the Douglas X3, which had a silhouette almost identical to that of the Swordfish. Finally – supreme accolade – 20 years later, the Americans announced the opening of an evaluation program between 44 manufacturers for a flying submarine project! And the US Navy clarified that this was in no way some science-fiction project; it deemed the existing technology sufficient to launch into the study of such a machine at that time.



DOUGLAS X3
© Science & Vie

Some technical details: the Swordfish was designed to be remote-controlled, and it was only under the pressure of events and running out of time that the heroes Blake and Mortimer, risking everything, took the extreme chance of flying the partially equipped aircraft themselves, taking the place of the remote-control mechanism.

The use and working of the controls are absolutely identical whether in flight or underwater. In flight, the engine's fuel feed is provided by the air. When diving, the air intake shuts off in contact with the water and automatically switches the circuit over to the oxygen tanks.

Note: the aircraft's nose drops off for pilot ejection.

Weapon load: infrared-guided, nuclear-tipped rockets and missiles.

Edgard Félix Pierre Jacobs (1904–1987), better known under his pen name Edgar P. Jacobs, was a comic book creator (writer and artist), born in Brussels, Belgium. It has been said of Jacobs that he didn't remember a time when he hadn't drawn.

Jacobs assisted fellow Belgian Hergé (Georges Prosper Remi) in the recasting of Hergé's *Tintin in the Congo*, *Tintin in America*, *King Ottokar's Sceptre* and *The Blue Lotus* for book publication. He also contributed directly to both the drawing and storylines for the Tintin double-albums *The Secret of the Unicorn/Red Rackham's Treasure* and *The Seven Crystal Balls/Prisoners of the Sun*.

When the comics magazine Tintin was launched on 26th September 1946, it included Jacobs' story *Le secret de l'Espadon* (*The Secret of the Swordfish*). This story would be the first in the Blake and Mortimer series.

The characters of Captain Francis Blake, dashing head of MI5, his friend Professor Philip Mortimer, a nuclear physicist, and their sworn enemy Colonel Olrik became legendary heroes of the 9th art in the long-running series.

After Jacobs' death in 1987, Bob de Moor completed his unfinished last story. In the mid-1990s, the series was continued by the Jacobs Studios with new teams of writers and artists.



ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION		
1	1950	Le secret de l'Espadon, T1
2	1953	Le secret de l'Espadon, T2
3	1953	Le secret de l'Espadon, T3
4	1954	Le mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T1
5	1955	Le mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T2
6	1956	La marque Jaune
7	1957	L'énigme de l'Atlantide
8	1959	S.O.S. Météores
9	1962	Le piège diabolique
10	1967	L'affaire du collier
11	1971	Les trois formules du professeur Satō, T1
12	1990	Les trois formules du professeur Satō, T2 (Jacobs/De Moor)
13	1996	L'affaire Francis Blake (Van Hamme/Benoit)
14	2000	La machination Voronov (Sente/Juillard)
15	2001	L'étrange rendez-vous (Van Hamme/Benoit)
16	2003	Les sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T1 (Sente/Juillard)
17	2004	Les sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T2 (Sente/Juillard)
18	2008	Le sanctuaire du Gondwana (Sente/Juillard)
19	2009	La malédiction des 30 deniers, T1 (Van Hamme/Sterne/De Spiegeleer)
20	2010	La malédiction des 30 deniers, T2 (Van Hamme/Aubin)
21	2012	Le serment des cinq Lords (Sente/Juillard)
22	2013	L'onde Septimus (Dufaux/Aubin/Schröder)
23	2014	Le bâton de Plutarque (Sente/Juillard)

CINEBOOK EDITION		
15	2013	The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 1
16	2013	The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 2
17	2013	The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 3
2	2007	The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 1
3	2008	The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 2
1	2007	The Yellow "M"
12	2012	Atlantis Mystery
6	2009	S.O.S. Meteors
19	2014	The Time Trap
7	2010	The Affair of the Necklace
22	2016	Professor Satō's Three Formulae, Part 1
23	2016	Professor Satō's Three Formulae, Part 2
4	2008	The Francis Blake Affair
8	2010	The Voronov Plot
5	2009	The Strange Encounter
9	2011	The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 1
10	2011	The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 2
11	2011	The Gondwana Shrine
13	2012	The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver, Part 1
14	2012	The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver, Part 2
18	2014	The Oath of the Five Lords
20	2015	The Septimus Wave
21	2015	Plutarch's Staff



LYNX-EMPIRE